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ROMANTIC TALES.

MY UNCLE'S GARRET WINDOW.

ROMANTIC TALES.

BY

M. G. LEWIS.

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CONTAINING

MY UNCLE'S GARRET WINDOW; THE ANACONDA AND, AMORASSAN.

"Ah! happy he, who thus in magic themes
O'er worlds bewitched in early rapture dreams;
Where wild Enchantment waves her potent wand,
And Fancy's beauties fill her fairy land."

CRABBE.

LONDON:
GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS.
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1857.

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God
823
Lewis/Robin
Jenkins

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE tales of which this volume is composed are adaptations from the German. They were originally published, with several others, about the year 1808. They deserve to be better known, and therefore are reprinted in the present form.

AUGUST, 1838.

MY UNCLE'S GARRET WINDOW.

MY UNCLE'S GARRET-WINDOW.

"With silent steps I'll follow you all day."—DRYDEN.

My uncle was a genius and a poet—of course, he was as poor as David's rat, and lived in a garret. He was a kind-hearted man, and I loved him too sincerely to hesitate at putting my neck in jeopardy once a day by climbing the crazy ladder, which afforded the only means of reaching his celestial abode. Yet, after my taking all this trouble, it frequently happened, that I found my uncle too busy with his Muses to bestow any of his attention on so insignificant an animal as his nephew. On these occasions, he contented himself with shaking me by the hand in silence, laying his finger on his lip, and pointing to a joint-stool, which stood close by the window; for he occupied himself the only chair in the room, and even that had but three legs to boast of: the joint-stool, therefore, though not so dignified a seat, was in fact a much more secure and comfortable one.

But when I found myself established on my joint-stool, how was I to employ myself? When my uncle was seized with one of these fits of inspiration, they frequently continued for a considerable time; where then

was I to find amusement during this interval? My uncle was too much an author to think any body's works worth reading except his own; for those I happened to have no great taste, and I did not care to affront him by asking for the productions of any other brain. Reading then was out of the question; and, in order that my eyes might not be quite idle, I employed them in examining what was going on in the house opposite to us. By the help of a pocket telescope, I could distinctly see every thing which passed in our neighbour's first and second floors: and after indulging myself for some days in these observations, I became so well acquainted with every member of this unknown family, that I felt myself as much interested about their proceedings, as if I had been a member of it myself.

You will say that this systematic *espionage* was not very honourable—I allow it. But then, on the other hand, it was very entertaining; and I am going to bribe you to approve of my conduct, by admitting you to a partnership in my stolen knowledge.

The street which my uncle inhabited was narrow, and the quarter was not one of the most fashionable; but the furniture of the house in question convinced me, that its owner must certainly be a man of considerable opulence. This owner (for the sake of distinction, we will call him Sempronius, for I have been too much occupied by his actions to have inquired for his real name as yet), this owner is not exactly the sort of man whom I should voluntarily have selected for the hero of my tale; but beggars must not be choosers, and I must take the good man as I find him. He seems to labour under some hypochondriacal complaint, and as he frequently suffers himself in his moments of weakness to indulge his ill-temper, I have not the least hopes of working him up into a portrait of heroic fortitude: on the other hand, I have as little hopes of his furnishing my drama with a striking character for my villain. It's true, he

governs his whole family with a rod of iron, and I have already discovered that he is a domestic tyrant; every one seems to feel constrained in his company; and it is only in the absence of the master of the mansion, that innocent mirth ventures to show itself within its doors. Yet still I observe, that with the same unbending gravity with which he censures his wife and rates his servants he receives every Sunday the visits of a distressed emigrant (with whose worth and whose wants accident has made me well acquainted), to whose complaints he seems to listen with unwearied patience, and whom he never suffers to depart with empty pockets. As the poor gentleman retraces his steps, I observe that his walk is firmer and lighter, and that not unfrequently a tear trembles in his eye; but he never quits the street without turning back, and with clasped hands casting a look of gratitude towards the window of Sempronius's study. Sempronius then has a good heart, but a most intolerable temper. Well! well! we will hope, that his ill-temper proceeds from ill-health and from increasing years, for Sempronius cannot now be far from his grand climacteric. I conclude this from the colour of his hair, which here and there age has already silvered.

I conjecture that he must be a merchant of some kind or other. What makes me think this is, that the ground-floor of his house looks as if it had been converted into a magazine. Besides, he is regularly absent from home exactly at 'Change-hours: I am rather of opinion, that he dabbles in the funds.

But how, in the name of wonder, could Sempronius, so little amiable as he appears to be, have obtained such a treasure as the wife whom I am going to describe? —or rather how came he to be so singularly fortunate as to draw *two* such great prizes in Hymen's lottery—a lottery in which (heaven have pity on all poor Christian husbands!) there are so many blanks? Many years ago he lost a wife.—Oh! she was worthy to have been

the empress of her whole sex!—So beautiful—so good. "You have seen her then?" Such was my uncle's demand one day, when I was indulging myself in enthusiastic but just commendations of the lady in question. "You have seen her then? You knew her!"—"Alas! never! I was not so fortunate."—"But you have been told of her charms and merits?"—"Not a syllable; I never heard her mentioned in my life."—"Then, pray, how are you so certain that she was so beautiful and so good?"—"Why, my dear uncle, you must know that her picture in oils hangs in the second wife's sitting-room, and never was my eye gratified by more perfect features, or a more noble countenance; and that this countenance belonged to the wife of Sempronius there can be no doubt. Sempronius himself (but much younger) is introduced in the picture; and the attitude in which the painter has represented them, sufficiently marks the relation of the parties; besides, if there were no other reason for concluding that she was his wife, I should be convinced of it by the striking resemblance between her countenance and that of a young man about twenty, who appears to be our neighbour's son, and probably is the only offspring of this marriage."

"Well! sir! well! so much for her beauty, and her marriage. Now, sir, granting that she was a wife, what makes you suppose, that she must necessarily have been a *good* one?"

"My dear sir, it is quite impossible that she should have been otherwise. Whenever Sempronius is displeased with his present help-mate, he never fails to point to that portrait: he seems to contrast her conduct with that of the object of his reproof, and to hold her up as a model for the imitation of the whole sex; while on the other hand, his second wife—she is reading King Lear at this moment, for the edition is Boydell's, and I can distinctly read the title; so we will call her Cordelia, if you please—Cordelia, then, whenever she finds her

patience on the point of being shipwrecked among the numberless little domestic storms which the unhappy temper of our friend Sempronius is perpetually raising, constantly fixes her eyes on that mild heavenly countenance, and seems to ask—'In this situation how would *you* have acted?'—She then turns to her peevish husband with a serene look; the clouds of displeasure, which were gathering on her brow, have totally disappeared; she takes his hand kindly, as if imploring his pardon for having given him offence; and never leaves him, till her winning manners and engaging smiles have charmed away his ill-humour, as David's lyre banished the evil spirit from the bosom of the frantic Saul."

"But, pray, nephew, what makes you be so certain, that the original of this portrait, which produces such beneficial effects, is no longer in existence?"

"Surely the presence of a second wife is a proof fully sufficient of the decease of a first."

"But there may be no second wife in the case; Cordelia may be his daughter."

"Impossible, my dearest uncle! absolutely impossible! A thousand little circumstances—the tender familiarity which exists between her and Sempronius—the authority with which she governs the whole house—the intimate, yet respectful conduct towards her of her step-son Edward (you see I make no scruple of christening my neighbours over again)—the difference which Sempronius makes in his behaviour, when addressing her, and when addressing the said Edward. No; it is quite impossible that Cordelia should be anything but his wife. Besides, to put the matter out of all doubt, you must know that there is a little boy about eight or nine years old, whose features exhibit the same mixed resemblance to Cordelia and Sempronius, which Edward's exhibit to Sempronius and the lady, of whose portrait I have spoken in terms of such warm approbation."

Cordelia then is the wife of Sempronius; and what a

wife! Perhaps she is the only woman on earth worthy to occupy the place of her predecessor! Her whole constitution seems to be composed of gentleness and benevolence; and, in truth, it was necessary that she *should* be composed of such materials, in order that the vinegar of her husband's disposition might be softened down and rendered supportable by the infusion of her oil of roses. I am thoroughly instructed in her mode of life, for I can overlook the whole of her sitting-room. It joins on to her husband's study, and here she passes the greatest part of the day. Here she sits, works, writes, and reads; some of her books are now lying in the window, and even at this distance I can distinguish the names of "Shakspeare," "Cowper," and "Paley." Here it is that she settles all the affairs of her household, and from hence as from their centre I can see good order, diligence, and economy spread themselves forth, and pervade every department of her family. Different occupations have all their stated hours; always active, always employed, without noise, without hurry, she manages that everything should be done in its proper time and place; and the hand, with which she governs the whole machine, is no less light than sure and steady.

I will only mention two other points in Cordelia's character which have struck, and which please me particularly. The one is, that in spite of her husband's lectures and frequent appeals to it she still suffers the portrait of his first wife to decorate her own private apartment. The other is, that in her endeavours to sooth her husband she never fails to be successful, and that in her presence Sempronius always seems to be less gloomy and less unruly, than when he is beyond the sphere of her influence.

Her step-son is established in the second floor; his room is exactly over his father's study, and there prevails in it an air of systematic confusion, books, letters, old pens and inkstands lie so mingled together upon all

the chairs and tables, and sheets of half-written paper full of blots and scratches are so constantly fluttering about the chamber, that I have no sort of doubt of his being a poet; not to mention a large book in a white parchment cover, which has quite the look of a common-place book, and in which he frequently writes a few lines, after biting the top of his quill for some minutes, and taking two or three turns up and down the room, accompanying his movement by vehement gesticulations. I am also convinced that his verses are generally amatory, and addressed to no imaginary object. He often copies something out of the aforesaid book with the white parchment cover, and seals it up carefully in the form of a letter, which he always gives the postman with his own hands. Besides, when he has secured his door against intruders, (ah! poor lad! how little he suspects that I see everything that he is about!) he frequently reads over and over again certain little notes, written on a fine shining paper with coloured edges, and very neatly folded up, and which he seldom fails to press repeatedly to his lips, before he arrives at the end of them. As to the peculiarities of his temper, I observe, by what passes between him and his father, and still more between him and a certain aunt who frequents the family, that his feelings are quick and susceptible, and that he easily takes offence. He is careless and rather *harum-skarum*, for he sometimes leaves the key in the secretary, where all these precious *billets-doux* are deposited, and then suddenly recollecting his neglect, he flies up stairs to repair it, in such a hurry that I expect him every moment to break his neck by the way. He is benevolent, for he never sees a beggar without relieving him; extravagant, for he receives his allowance monthly, and it never lasts above half the time; proud and high-minded, for, having applied to his father either for an increase of allowance or an advance, (I could not exactly ascertain which,) and receiving a

refusal in the first instance, when Sempronius sent him a bank-note the next morning, the youth returned it, and preferred waiting till the first of the present month. I observe, too, that he is sometimes a little out of humour without cause, in which I suppose he takes after his father: however, his ill-temper never is vented upon anything except his spaniel, whom he feeds all dinner-time, and who always sleeps with his head resting upon the foot of his master.

As to his half-brother, little Willy, he is too young as yet to show much character; but I am very much mistaken, if he has not a decided genius for the arts. Every morsel of paper, which falls in his way, is immediately covered with his inventions. If his pencil is taken from him, he hunts about till he finds a piece of coal or chalk, with which he scrawls landscapes and figures over all the doors, walls, and tables, to the great annoyance of his order-loving mother, and of the housemaid, whose wet napkin has no sort of respect for the productions of this juvenile Sir Joshua. In a moment the effusions of his genius are effaced for ever. But in vain does his mother scold, in vain does the housemaid scrub; he sets to work again with unabated ardour, and in defiance of these enemies of art in a few hours the walls, doors, and tables, are as fully decorated as before.

But I must not omit the portrait of the before-mentioned aunt, who, though not an inmate of the family, exercises over it no inconsiderable authority. From her likeness to Sempronius, she must certainly be his sister, though evidently some years older. She is tall, thin, pale, and then such a nose and chin! She is almost a daily guest, and Sempronius never suffers himself to indulge his ill-humours in her society. Sempronius is a shrewd long-headed man, and minds the main chance: from the respect which he pays her I conclude that the old lady is in good circumstances, her own mistress, without

children, and that her brother flatters himself that either he or his offspring will hold no contemptible place in her will. Nay, I am not only persuaded that she has no children, but that the venerable lady is still a votary of Diana; which conclusion I draw, not only from observations made on her person and manners, but from the extreme love and intimacy which prevail between her and a large tortoise-shell cat, which generally lies basking before Cordelia's fire.

This good lady (what shall we call her? Her brother's name is Sempronius—"Amandus he; Amanda she"—So says Sterne—Sempronia be her name then), Sempronia then, seems much attached to her brother, but Cordelia is evidently no favourite with her. She treats her with such cold and formal politeness. She so often bites her thin lips, as if desirous of repressing a scornful sneer, and which she takes good care not to repress. If she opens one of the volumes placed on Cordelia's table, she never fails to clap it down again hastily with such a shrug of the shoulders, and such a shake of the head, and then such a turning up of the whites of her eyes to heaven. From the latter circumstance I am tempted to believe, that the good lady has been a little bit by the Methodists. However, Cordelia considers it as beneath her to take notice of these little pieces of impertinence, and only answers the sneer of contempt, with which her sister-in-law occasionally favours her, by a smile of the sweetest gentleness and most heavenly forbearance. As to Edward, he and his aunt are at open enmity: three minutes of conversation with her are generally sufficient to make him throw out fire and flames; then he flies out of the room, and up go the whites of her eyes more piteously than ever.

But undoubtedly her greatest favourite in the family (I mean, the greatest upon two legs) is little Willy: he holds the very next place in her good graces to the tortoise-shell cat. Of this the young rogue seems con-

scious; and, proud of enjoying that sunshine which is bestowed upon so few, he never fails to welcome her arrival by a voluntary offering of his rosy lips, and sports and frisks about her arm chair as merrily and as wantonly as a butterfly flutters about a honey-pot. I warrant me, the good lady is seldom unprovided with a box full of sugar-plums.

Such are the persons who compose this family, and such is the knowledge which I have obtained of them during a daily observation of several months. But lately some circumstances have occurred, which have excited my curiosity respecting their concerns more than usually. I have fortunately succeeded in communicating this curiosity to my uncle's bosom; he has consented to be my amanuensis; and to-morrow, (he provided with plenty of ink, pen, and paper, and myself furnished with my aforesaid pocket-telescope,) it is our intention to commence an exact and systematic account of everything which passes in the house of his opposite neighbour. I am to report, and he is to register.

Having completed this introduction, which was necessary to make my readers acquainted with our dramatis personæ, I shall proceed to my employment—Hark!—The clock strikes ten. That is the hour at which Sempronius regularly makes his appearance at Cordelia's breakfast-table, and I hasten to post myself at

MY UNCLE'S GARRET-WINDOW.

Tuesday, May 5th, 4 o'clock.

YOUR new appointment of secretary, my dear uncle, is likely to be a sinecure for to-day. Cordelia and her boy are just gone into the country, and mean to pass some days there; for I saw her maid pack up two clean

muslin dresses and other things in the chaise-seat. Sempronius and his eldest son dine out: I saw the former show Edward the card of invitation; and, by his pointing out a particular part of it, I conclude that he was bidding him observe the dinner hour, and take care to be ready in time; for punctuality is not among the number of Edward's good qualities. However, he will not be too late to-day, for he is dressing at this moment. A hackney-coach stops at the door. Sempronius and Edward are both gone, so you may lay down your pen, my dear uncle!

Wednesday, 5 o'clock.

To-day promises to be as barren as yesterday. Sempronius has finished a solitary meal in his own study, and is now making a toothpick. It seems, he is not very skilful, for he has already spoiled two quills; and now in a pet he throws the splinters of the third to one side of the room, and the penknife to the other. Deuce take the peevish old fellow! I protest, his ill-temper almost makes me lose mine. I'll step up stairs, and see what Edward is about.

I might as well have staid where I was; Edward is not at home.

Look! look! the study door opens. Now then we shall have something interesting.—Pshaw! it's only the maiden-aunt. But this is not her usual time for visiting us. And, bless my heart! what a fuss the old woman seems to be in! She opens the door which communicates with Cordelia's drawing-room, and looks around to see whether the coast is clear. I protest, I can as little tell what to make of her mysterious proceedings as her brother, who sits there with his mouth open, his eyes staring, his brows drawn together, his hands resting on his knees, and his whole body bending forwards. He is mightily puzzled!

But now we shall get a little insight into the business.

The virgin has seated herself close at his elbow, and with her nose almost running into his ear—I'm sure I pity him, poor man! I should dislike so much to have the old cat thus near me!—she opens all the sluices of her eloquence, while her arms assist her speech with all the powers of gesticulation.

Now what can she be chattering about? Something of consequence, that is certain—and of no pleasant import, that is equally sure; for Sempronius grows darker with every syllable—There! he was on the point of jumping up in a rage; but his tormentor grasped him by the arm, and forcing him into his chair again insisted upon being heard to an end. Still do the symptoms of repressed passion grow stronger and stronger. Now, then; ay, now the lava overflows! The man is absolutely terrific when he is really incensed. Till now I had only seen him play the Jupiter Tonans, when little domestic contrarieties had occurred to put him out of his way; but his anger was merely a gentle breeze compared to his present emotions. His mind is now agitated by a tempest, a tornado, a sirocco burning and pestilential! I never saw a man in such a passion before. Bless my soul! bless my soul! What can the old cat have been telling him?

All of a sudden he leaves off prancing about the room, stalks up to his sister's chair, and standing before her looks her full in the face!—an appeal to her conscience, no doubt; a solemn inquiry whether all that she has been saying is not a falsehood of her own invention. The aunt is highly offended at the question; she rises with great dignity from her seat; she stretches out her yellow arm, and is going to call Heaven to witness that—No, no; she points to the door leading to the staircase, and a contemptuous sneer which accompanies the action, assures me that she tells Sempronius, that there lies the way by which he may remove all doubts. I am right; Sempronius bounces to the door. In his

impatience he cannot turn the lock; he kicks the door violently, and at length it gives way; he beckons his sister and disappears. A prayer-book has almost forced itself out of her pocket; she stops to push it back again, and then follows her brother, with her hands placed orderly before her, and the composure of a saint! Good soul! Bless my heart! what mischief can she be about? It is growing dusky. I declare, I have a great mind to run down into the street, and watch for their coming out; then, by dodging them unobserved, who knows but I may discover at last—Stop! stop! I may spare myself the trouble. As I hope to live and breathe, the amiable pair are at this very moment in Edward's chamber.

Sempronius stands before his son's writing-desk. It is fastened, but that matters little: the father has forced the lock; open flies every drawer; out flies every paper —Surely, no deficiency in the counting-house; no suspicious entry in his books. Oh! no; I have been too long intimate with Edward, and know his character and heart too well; such a thing is quite impossible: besides, Sempronius finds a purse half full, and throws it aside, with an air of indifference. Ha! ha! now I understand him! He examines the secretary; he suspects that there is a private drawer. Yes; what he wishes to discover (ah! I could tell him where to find them!) are precisely those very things which Edward is most anxious to hide from every one. No eye has ever been suffered to see them but his own (and mine). These are what Sempronius wishes to find—Mercy upon me! he has found them! The secret spring has given way; the drawer is open! And what does it contain? First comes a thick packet of letters, carefully tied together with riband, colour sky-blue. (Have you written it down, my dear uncle? Very well!) Secondly, a nosegay, but so faded that I cannot even guess at the flowers. Thirdly, upon my honour, nothing less than a

miniature in a shagreen case! Sempronius shakes his head, and shows it to his sister; it is plain that he has never seen the original. His sister scarcely looks at it, but shrugs up her shoulders; it is equally plain that she has never seen the original either, and that the object of Edward's attachment as yet is only conjectured. Yet Sempronius does not seem the less displeased, for down goes the miniature on the floor, and away goes the poor skeleton of a nosegay out of the window. Alas! alas for Edward! the ill-natured aunt has certainly discovered what I flattered myself was a secret only known to himself and to me; and she is now determined to take ample revenge on him for having occasionally dared to be of one opinion, when she was of another.

While Sempronius is busied with the secretary, the antiquated dragon of virtue is by no means idle; she has been tossing over Edward's wardrobe; for the careless youth had left the key in the lock. Her brother is now reading the letters one after another: however, their contents seem by no means to his taste, for he seldom gets through more than half a dozen lines before the paper bestrews the floor with a thousand pieces; yet still he proceeds to inspect the next. Hold! hold! Sempronia interrupts him. She has found a prize! But I cannot see anything in it which should give her so much joy. It seems to me nothing more than a plain white dimity waistcoat, which was hanging upon the arm of a chair, unconscious of harm and meditating no treason. Ha! but the aunt has discovered an inner pocket on the left side, exactly on the place against which the heart must beat. From this Sempronia now draws forth with a look of triumph a riband, ornamented with embroidery in silver. Well! I protest, I can still see no harm in the riband. Sempronius, however, is not of the same opinion, for down go the remaining letters on the floor, while he seizes

the riband, and examines it closely. Ha! now I comprehend. The letters were not signed; there was a doubt respecting the writer; but on the riband the name of the giver was embroidered; though whether at length, or only the initials, I will not pretend to say. However, either has answered Miss Grimalkin's purpose; for she draws up her scraggy neck half a yard higher, while her brother's face looks like a volcano, all black and fiery, and away fly the riband and the waistcoat through the window into the street.

They fall exactly upon the head of a passenger, who, quite surprised at this unexpected salutation, stops, and disengaging his head from the waistcoat picks up the riband, whose glittering ornaments—may I never speak again, if it is not Edward himself! He recognizes the precious pledge of affection: but, thrown into the street—? He makes but one spring to the door—ring, ring, ring, goes the bell; an old grey-headed footman opens the door—Edward rushes in; the door closes; I see that Sempronius and his amiable sister have heard the bell ring violently; but, before they have time to conjecture the cause, Edward stands before them breathless with speed and anxiety, his cheeks burning, his eyes staring, his mouth open, and the important riband still fluttering in his hand; his spaniel too has recognized his master's property, and has dragged the white dimity waistcoat up stairs in his mouth. Edward has got no further than the door; there he stands like a statue, as if petrified by the sight of the two arch-foes of his love, while the fragments of the letters strewn on the floor leave him no doubt, that the repository of his dearest secret has been violated.

"Walk in, young gentleman! pray, walk in; we shall be very glad of your company!" cries the father: not that I hear a syllable; but nothing can be more expressive of sarcastic politeness, than the frequent bowing of his head, and the waving his hand backwards and

forwards, while his lips quiver and his eyes flame. And now he points to the miniature as a proof, which puts the case out of doubt.

And how does Edward look? like some miserable sinner, surprised *in flagranti?*—not he truly!—the first thing he does is to seize the mis-used picture, and press it to his heart, as if anxious to make atonement for its having been treated so unworthily: and now he advances towards his father, slowly but firmly, and with humility but not meanness takes his hand, and raises it affectionately to his lips.

Now, if *I* were Sempronius, this submissive action would go a great way towards softening my heart; I should find it very difficult to remain quite as angry as I intended. But whether he is himself conscious of this effect, and is afraid of giving way to his own weakness, or whether he is ashamed of yielding so soon, and before a witness who would not fail to upraid him for his folly; whatever be the cause, it is certain that Edward's humility has not produced the desired effect; on the contrary, Sempronius seems to be more incensed than before; and repulsing his son with violence the sudden movement makes him strike his hand against the lips which were in the act of kissing it. Edward starts back hastily and covers his mouth with his handkerchief; but he endeavours in vain to conceal the blood which gushes from his bruised lips; the cambric is dyed with crimson. This sight rouses even old grimalkin's sensibility; she looks alarmed and places herself between them, while she grasps her brother by the arm.

And now, instead of being Sempronius, if I were Edward, I would stand boldly on the consciousness of my good intentions, and collecting the whole firmness of my character I would tell the choleric old man—"And yet in spite of this ill-usage, I still kiss in spirit with sincere affection the hand which repulsed me so unkindly. Yes, I avow it! (and my only fault is, that I

did not avow it sooner) a virtuous maiden possesses my whole heart; I love her, and shall love her while I live. Here is her portrait; but it is painted *here*," (and then I'd point to my heart,) "in colours never to be effaced. Perhaps you will disapprove of my attachment at first; but only become acquainted with her merits, and I am certain of obtaining your consent. Nay; I should be certain of it even at this moment, if instead of tearing her letters you could but have had patience to read them through."

Now, I'd wager my pocket telescope (which at this moment is invaluable) against the old goose-quill with which you are writing, my dear uncle, that as soon as the blood would permit him to speak, Edward said these very words, or at least something very like them. He showed the miniature—he pointed to his heart, and afterwards to the letters—he clasped his hands together, and raised his eyes to heaven with a look of such enthusiasm, while attesting the perfections of his mistress. Upon my word, I did not give the hot-headed youth credit for so much temper and good sense.

Sempronius exercises his only talent; he fumes and storms, and stalks about the room, and curses and swears, and calls heaven and hell to witness; while the good lady sister, having completed her benevolent work, sits by the window and looks into the street, quite unconcerned, and as if she had nothing at all to do with the business.

So much the better, now that her venomous tongue is at rest the storm begins to slacken. Sempronius walks backwards and forwards in silence for some minutes. Now he stands still, and leans against the wall with his fore finger extended upon his cheek, as if buried in profound thought; he has come to a decision; he advances towards his son, and—heaven be thanked! then parental affection still lives in his bosom, for, of his own accord, he offers his hand to Edward. Edward springs forward eagerly to clasp it. But hold! Sempronius draws it

back, and the fore-finger of it, repeatedly moving upwards and downwards, assures me that he is laying down the conditions upon which Edward may be restored again to favour.

Edward starts back; he stands motionless; his eye burns; he seems to struggle against his feelings: if Sempronius were not his father, I should expect to see the youth turn his back upon him with contempt. In short, he looks to me exactly as if the terms of peace just proposed had been—"an absolute renunciation of the maiden in question, and for ever!" I am certainly right; for at length Edward has recovered the power of speech. He places one hand upon his heart; he raises the other to heaven with an air of the most determined resolution; and with every word which he utters his courage and his enthusiasm appear to increase. But he is not suffered to speak long. The tempest rages again; Sempronius interrupts his son with a fresh burst of thunder: and now that the fire is re-kindled, the rattlesnake in petticoats takes care to throw in a word or two, as she looks over her shoulder towards the disputants, and kindly prevents the flame from being extinguished a second time.

The Lord be praised! this embarrassing scene at length is concluded; Sempronius's passion on a sudden gives place to the most frozen composure; he spreads his arms out widely, and with a shrug of the shoulders and a slight inclination of the head he pronounces a slight decisive sentence, and quits the room. Edward turns pale; he looks as if he could scarcely credit his hearing, and remains like one thunderstruck. Can you possibly guess, my dear uncle, what it was that Sempronius said at parting, and which produced so strong an effect? For my own part, I am completely puzzled.

The aunt, however, does not think proper to make her retreat at present. No; she is preparing to give her nephew a long lecture; for she turns her chair round,

clears her throat in her pocket-handkerchief, smooths her petticoats, and takes a pinch of snuff. Now then she begins.

She might spare her breath, for Edward does not hear a syllable; he seems totally absorbed in his own gloomy reflections. The virgin might have talked on till doomsday uninterrupted by him, if she had not unadvisedly taken it into her head to pick up the fragments of one of the letters, which accident had thrown at her feet; and now, as proof of the facts advanced in her discourse, she proceeds to read the letters aloud with a sneering look and theatrical action. The well-known words give Edward the alarm; he awakens from his lethargy. This unwarrantable intrusion into the secrets of his heart, this scornful treatment both of his mistress and himself, at once restore his presence of mind. He springs forward, snatches the paper from her hands, and throwing his arms around her, bears her swiftly, but without roughness, to the landing-place. She evidently resists; her open mouth assures me that she protests loudly against this involuntary exit; but she is already on the wrong side of the threshold. Edward closes and bolts the door, and my eyes behold no longer this model of feminine perfection!

My grief for this loss, however, is but of short duration; she bounces into her brother's study, and renews her attacks upon him with increased zeal; Sempronius has seated himself at his writing-desk; he has written two notes, and in one of them, which was very short, he now encloses a parcel of bank-bills; he rings the bell and sends the old grey-headed servant out with the other. The aunt continues talking without repose, but she gets no answer. Sempronius walks up and down the room, silent and gloomy, and without attending to her; he seems impatient for the messenger's return.

The domestic is come back; he receives the other note with its inclosure, and retires a second time; but in

a minute after I see Edward undraw the bolt of his door, and the servant enters. Probably, the good old man guesses the contents of the note, for while he delivers it, he turns away his head, and the back of his hand passing over his eyes rapidly, appears to be wiping away tears.

The unfortunate lover receives the note with a firm countenance; but his resolution only lasts till he has perused the contents—the letter falls from his trembling hand; his arms drop powerless by his side; he rests his head against the frame of the window; he seems totally absorbed in the bitterness of his sensations.

The old domestic opens a closet door, and draws forth a moderate-sized trunk: undesired, he proceeds to pack up the contents of a wardrobe, and of a chest of drawers. Alas! alas! poor Edward! now then I know the decision of your unyielding father! The punishment pronounced upon you for possessing a feeling heart, eyes for beauty, and sympathy for worth, is nothing less than banishment from your parental mansion.

The trunk is packed and corded, and now with a countenance expressive of the deepest melancholy the old man offers Edward the key. Edward sees him not—hears him not—heeds him not, till he feels his right hand moistened with tears; he starts from his lethargy—he looks down—the venerable servant kneels at his feet; he has clasped the hand of his young master in both of his, and presses his lips upon it. Edward compels him to rise, and shakes the old man by the hand heartily and kindly: he takes the parcel of notes from the floor, and selecting one gives it to his old attendant, but the servant looks at it with a melancholy smile, shakes his head, lays it upon the writing-desk, and hiding his face with both his hands he quits the apartment.

Edward now proceeds to examine his papers. Some of them are fastened together again with the before-mentioned blue riband, and deposited in his bosom; with the rest he fills his pockets, indiscriminately; the

bank-notes are placed in a small red morocco case, and confided to his waistcoat; the spaniel frisks around the table, and every now and then I hear him bark joyously: probably, he is aware, that his master prepares to go out, and for his part he is quite ready to be of the party. But his gaiety makes a singular contrast with his master's melancholy.

Hark! a post-chaise comes rattling up the street! It stops before Sempronius's house—the door is already open; the postilion dismounts; he and the old servant are now in Edward's room, and carry out the trunk between them! What, then, my poor friend Edward! Am I quite to lose you? Will your severe father not even suffer you to breathe the same air with him? Now, by my soul, my heart bleeds for you!

The trunk is tied on—the postilion is on his horse—the chaise-step is let down—the old servant appears again in Edward's room. Edward starts up, and follows him, evidently making a violent effort to tear himself away; but when he reaches the door, he stops, and turns to take a melancholy farewell-look of that chamber, which perhaps he has inhabited even from his earliest years—where he has passed so many happy and so many bitter hours—where he has so often smiled, and so often wept—which he now quits and probably for ever! He draws his hat down over his eyes, and as he passes the threshold, I can see his knees tremble! Alas! poor youth! with a broken heart do you quit your father's dwelling; it seems, that even to say farewell to your stern judge is forbidden you! Oh! suffer with patience; suffer with firmness; preserve your good heart pure from every too bitter reflection upon him, who, harsh as he is, is still your parent. He has ceased to act as a father, but never forget that you are a son.

I am too much grieved by Edward's departure to attend with any patience to the amiable pair in the study below; they may do what they please, for I will not

honour them at present with my attention. Therefore, my dear uncle, you may lay down your pen for to-day; into the bargain, in half an hour more it will be too dark for me to—Sit down again! sit down again, my dear uncle, Edward is not yet gone! At this moment he stands before his mother's picture, which (as I told you formerly) hangs over the sofa in Cordelia's sitting-room—his eyes are rooted upon those beloved features—"Ah! mother!" methinks I hear him say, "it is well for you, that you sleep in the grave! It is well, that you are not here to see your only son banished from the house and heart of his father, and to kiss away these tears, which you would surely mingle with your own! Perhaps, were you still alive, all this would not happen; perhaps you would fold your arms round the son, who to-day is thrown out upon the wide world without shelter, and then when my father heard the prayers of an agonized mother pleading for her only child.—Oh! were you but alive, my mother! were not your place now filled by a stranger!"

No! no! these last sentences Edward did not say. I wrong his justice; he is not so ungrateful for all Cordelia's kindness—for see, he fastens the silver-embroidered riband round an alabaster vase which stands on Cordelia's chimney-piece; doubtless, he wishes to convince his step-mother that he thought of her at parting, and has bequeathed her this precious gift of love, as a silent memorial of his undiminished friendship. Oh! she will certainly find your legacy, poor Edward, and her own feeling heart will interpret to her the intentions and the sentiments of yours; she will often think of you while absent—will labour incessantly to effect your return; and while Cordelia remains there you will not be quite forgotten within the dwelling of your father.

Again he turns to his mother's picture; near it hangs a small sketch of it in Indian ink, the production of

Willy's all-imitating pencil; it is drawn upon a sheet of letter-paper, and fastened against the wall, thus (with the true vanity of a youthful artist) boldly challenging a comparison with the original. There are a thousand defects in the drawing; but, even from hence, I can see that he has succeeded in catching the resemblance. Edward eagerly snatches the paper from its place, and then, having pressed his lips with pious enthusiasm upon the frame of the picture, he hastens from the apartment as abruptly as if he dreaded lest his father should appear and deprive him of his newly-found treasure.

Edward is in the chaise—the post-boy flourishes his whip—Edward is gone!

Friday morning.

I have nicked the very moment; Cordelia's chaise stands before the door, and the old servant and the maid are busy in taking out the seat, and several parcels. The drawing-room door opens, and, gay as a lark, little Willy comes jumping into the chamber. His mother, then, cannot be far off. He carries a roll of paper under his arm, as black and smoky as if it were a manuscript dug out of the ruins of Herculaneum: he unrolls it and holds up the contents, to admire their reflection in the looking-glass. Now I understand what makes the boy seem so proud and so happy: at the house where he has been visiting, he discovered two old coloured prints, one representing a battle, and the other a hunting-match; and his good-natured host has gratified the future Raphael by making him a present of them both. Well, Willy, this is a treasure indeed!

But see, his mother makes her appearance; the old domestic follows her. Ah! then she has already heard of Edward's banishment; I could swear it by her pale countenance and dejected air. Without taking off her pelisse, she walks slowly towards the sofa, seats herself upon it, and, leaning her arm upon the table, and her

cheek against her hand, she seems buried in thoughts evidently of no pleasant nature. She now addresses a few short questions to the servant; his answers are equally brief; he is dismissed, and Willy is ordered to accompany him.

Cordelia is now alone; she sits with her hands clasped, her eyes fixed upon the carpet. Now she raises them to heaven, as if she uttered a mental prayer, and then wipes away a tear. Ah! her husband has long accustomed her to the expression of this silent grief—she rises, and paces up and down the chamber with an absent look; now her eye rests upon a flower-vase, round which the embroidered riband is fastened!—she stops—she seems to be endeavouring to recollect where she had seen it before—she unties it, and, while she reads the silver characters, a melancholy smile plays on her pale cheeks, and she shakes her head dejectedly. Now she unlocks a small japanned cabinet, in which she is accustomed to keep her most valuable ornaments, and in one of the drawers of which she deposits the embroidered riband; now suddenly she closes the cabinet, locks it, and conceals the key in her pocket.

The door opens—Sempronius enters. Oh! then, she had heard him coming up stairs. He has a pen stuck behind his ear, and probably is just come out of his counting-house (I suppose that it is in the back part of the house) to welcome his wife on her return home. The visit, however, does not seem to be quite to his taste; he looks like a schoolboy who has committed some fault, and expects to be scolded by his tutor. The first compliments are over, and the interview becomes quite comical: he evidently does not well know how to begin the relation of what has occurred during her absence; and she, for her part, does not seem at all inclined to give him the least assistance. They are both silent: he hums, and haws, and scrapes the carpet with his feet, and sits by no means comfortably upon his chair. Bravo!

how unusually polite the man is grown—he insists upon helping Cordelia to take off her pelisse; the pelisse is folded up, and yet the conversation does not get on. Sempronius walks to the window, and draws one of the Venetian blinds quite up. Thank you, good sir! it was very much in my way; but now I can see what you are about much better. He picks up a knitting-needle which had fallen on the floor: he looks out of the window, and beats time against the frame with his fingers. Now he walks to the fire-place, and sets his watch by a small chamber-clock which stands upon the mantel-piece: the clock is out of order, and has not gone for these nine days to my certain knowledge.

But Cordelia, whose gentle heart cannot bear to see any human being suffer, however deservedly, now relieves him from his painful embarrassment; she rises from the sofa; with a look at once expressing the most friendly interest and the most dignified reproach, she clasps the hand of her husband: she leads him back to the sofa, and places him before the portrait of his deceased wife. There is something so noble, so exalted in her look and attitude, that she appears to me like a superior being: how clearly does her countenance express, that she says at this moment to her husband, "Could yonder lips now say to you, 'thou harsh father, where is my son?' to such a question what answer could you make?"

He fixes his eyes on the ground: he dares not look upon the face either of the inanimate mother of his child, or of her living representative.

And now the excellent woman implores him not to be cruel to his son and to himself, while she gives unrestricted course to her tears, and while she endeavours to awaken his feelings by caresses, which express the most heartfelt interest and goodwill: and can Sempronius possibly resist her entreaties?

No, no! it would have been impossible, if he were

not already so very much in the wrong. He feels that to give way at all, would now be to confess that, in the whole affair, his conduct had been inexcusable: false shame prevents his retracting the sentence which he ought never to have pronounced. Unless Edward were declared to be an undutiful son, he should be tacitly proved to be himself the most unnatural of fathers. He therefore wilfully hardens his heart and blinds his judgment, in order to escape from the conviction of his error; and he now begins a long and animated narrative of all that has passed. Oh! how I wish that I were at his elbow, in order that I might set him right occasionally in point of historical fact, if it were only for the love which I bear his good lady-sister, who (if I had the management of the brush) should not be painted in this family picture in colours too flattering.

Sempronius's narrative has not produced the desired effect upon his wife; but at least he has contrived to talk himself once more into a persuasion that every thing which he has done has been perfectly proper. It was visible how his importance and self-satisfaction increased with every succeeding period; for the longer he talked the redder grew his face, and the more violent his action. At first, his only object was to conceal, under an appearance of resentment, how much Cordelia's representations had affected him; but he has succeeded in working himself up into a real fury, which has now got such complete possession of his mind as even to make him unjust towards Cordelia. Her tears, which stream afresh—the sudden glow, which flushes her pale cheeks—the look of mild reproach which she casts upon her accuser, and which declares herself fully justified before the tribunal of her conscience—all these circumstances can have no reference, except to some severe reproof, which Sempronius, in the violence of his passion, has just pronounced against his admirable wife. Perhaps he accuses her of countenancing his son in his disobedience—perhaps

she has been long the confidante of Edward's love-affair —perhaps she is acquainted with the maiden in question, and it was through her means that her step-son first formed an acquaintance which (according to Sempronius's views of the business) threatens to overturn that prosperity and respectability which he has been labouring all his life to establish. Whatever be the fault laid to Cordelia's charge, at least her husband ceases to reproach her with it for the present. The church-clock strikes: I suppose that it reminds him that it is time for him to go to the Exchange, for he quits the room abruptly, and bangs the door after him with such violence that he makes all the windows rattle. Business also calls me away myself; therefore, farewell, my dear uncle, till after dinner.

Friday afternoon.

Sempronius dines at four: the meal to-day has been unusually short. It is not yet five, and Sempronius has already shut himself up alone in his study, a certain sign that he is still out of temper. Ah! Cordelia is never out of temper! With a resigned melancholy air she is seated at her piano-forte. A small upright book is open before her: to judge by its dark-blue cover, and by the small proportion which the music bears to the words printed at the bottom, I suspect that she is singing something out of the Edinburgh edition of Scotch Melodies; probably some plaintive air, which accords with the present disposition of her thoughts. At least, the slow movement of her fingers, the expression of her countenance, and her head reclining a little (but *only* a little) towards her left shoulder, convince me that she must be playing an adagio.

A girl enters with a band-box. Surely I have seen her face before. Oh! now I recollect her; she carries out parcels for the milliner, who lives a few doors further down the street. She opens her band-box; but

Cordelia shakes her head. It seems that she wants nothing of that kind at present; but when refused in so gentle a manner, why should the girl look so frightened? She casts a look of apprehension round her . . . . Hey-day!—she has suddenly snatched a letter out of her band-box, thrown it into Cordelia's lap, and now she runs down stairs ready to break her neck. The ambassadress must know but little of Cordelia, if she supposes that she will receive a letter which reaches her by so mysterious a conveyance. Accordingly, she has already quitted the piano-forte in pursuit of the fugitive; the letter has fallen on the ground, and . . . . but softly! she stops suddenly with her hand resting upon the lock of the door. The letter, which now lies on the carpet, has caught her eye; she certainly must have recognised some well-known hand-writing.

She has!—she springs towards the letter, seizes it eagerly, and conceals it in her bosom, while a deep crimson overspreads her face. She now opens the other door, opposite to that by which the milliner left her; probably it leads to her bed-chamber, which is in the back part of the house: the door closes, and I see Cordelia no longer.

What can be the meaning of all this? Surely I know Cordelia too well to . . . . Is it possible that I should have formed an erroneous opinion of her character and principles? Nay; if I find myself deceived here in my notions of female virtue, I will never look for it elsewhere.

Ha! I begin to fear that the mystery will be unravelled in the most disagreeable manner. The stair-case door is thrown open, and Sempronia makes her appearance, and hands into the room . . . . (not very gently or politely, I must confess,) . . . . the milliner's apprentice! The venerable virgin seems to be in a great heat! What has happened? I suppose she met the girl on the stairs: and if she was hurrying down them

as quick as she bolted out of the drawing-room, no wonder if she excited suspicion in the fair bosom of Miss Grimalkin, who (I warrant) has brought her back, in order that she might examine her quite at her ease.

The examination is not a very quiet one. Our dearly-beloved aunt is somewhat more violent than becomes a grand inquisitor; and the supposed culprit does not seem to want for spirit. Now they both talk together. If I were not so intimately acquainted with the affairs of this family, I should think that Sempronius had imported two fish-wives from Billingsgate.

The music of these two nightingales has attracted the notice of the master of the house, and he leaves his study to enjoy it more distinctly. He inquires the cause of all this uproar; but the ladies talk on without listening to him. Sempronia examines the band-box; the milliner, with sarcastic politeness, turns out the contents of her pockets, and begs the virgin to convince herself that there is nothing concealed in her thimble and a silver nutmeg-grater. Now the storm rages more violently than ever, till Sempronius bursts out like a clap of thunder, and terrifies them both into silence. He menaces the girl with his finger. He points down the street. Aye; I suppose he threatens her with a complaint to her mistress, for she begins to look uneasy, keeps edging away towards the door, and at last appears to have considerable satisfaction in being permitted to make her escape in a whole skin.

Sempronia, however, seems more martially inclined than ever since the retreat of the enemy. She proceeds to harangue with the most violent action, heedless of her brother's impatience, while he walks up and down the room, and . . . . but on a sudden he stands still, and stares her full in the face, while his countenance expresses the greatest dismay and astonishment. Some important word has escaped her, which evidently has touched the master-string of his whole united sensibili-

ties. She, too, seems considerably embarrassed at the hardy assertion which has just fallen from her. She is silent: but now she makes up her mind. She strikes her right hand closed against the open palm of her left, with a look of diabolical determination, and then seizing her brother's arm draws him back again into his study, and shuts the door.

The secret which she is now disclosing, is clearly no trifle. How uneasy, how gloomy, seems Sempronius! Now he starts from his chair, opens the door leading to the drawing-room, looks in to ascertain that nobody is there, then enters, and motions to his sister to follow him. The sweet creature does not require to be told twice: they approach Cordelia's writing-desk; it is unlocked. Now, shame upon him! He is examining the pens, to see whether they have been used lately; while his worthy sister inspects the inkstand, in hopes of discovering some fallen drops upon the brink of it; and feels whether there is any remaining warmth to be perceived in the sealing-wax.

They have made no discoveries, and are now returning to the study. Sempronius, however, comes back to the writing-table, and counts the sheets of paper, in order that, if his wife should carry on any correspondence unknown to him, the deficiency of a sheet may apprise him of the fact. Ah! my worthy friend! how richly do you deserve the fate of which you are so apprehensive!

I am tired of this tête-à-tête. Is nothing to be discovered in the other apartments? Stay! did I tell you, my dear uncle, that there is an old lumber-room, which joins Edward's forsaken bed-chamber? As nobody ever enters this place, except to store away empty boxes or useless furniture, Willy is here secure from interruption, and has accordingly selected it for his painting-room. Here he passes hour after hour in scratching and daubing, and here he is established at this very

moment. The two coloured prints are stretched against the wall, and he often suspends his work to gaze in admiration upon the gorgeous assemblage of reds, and blues, and greens, and yellows; an assemblage, however, which he is unable to rival in his present performance; for he has emptied all his shells of paint, and has no better resource than the inkstand.

The work is complete. He seems to be mightily pleased with it. He opens the window, and holds the piece of paper out of it, waving it backwards and forwards, in order that the ink (which he has not spared) may dry in the open air the sooner. If he would but turn himself ever so little more to the right, I should be able to favour him with my opinion of his performance. That will do, my little friend! Upon my word, very clever! I never saw a more striking resemblance! 'Tis the aunt's profile, and as ugly as life! There is no mistaking it; not a wrinkle about the corners of her little fiery eyes is omitted; the twist of her nose is hit off to a nicety, and the falling in of her toothless mouth (though perhaps rather overdone) is excellently preserved: nay, he has not forgotten even the great wart with which her chin is decorated. To be sure it is not a flattering one, but the portrait is the very counterpart of Nature in all her undisguised deformity. But what can have induced the young rogue to employ his pencil, or rather his pen, on such an unpromising subject? This is the first caricature that I ever saw him attempt, and if it should fall into the hands of the original, I am afraid that the painter's reward would by no means be of the most satisfactory nature.

He still stands before the window, and seems to be holding forth to himself. He uses a great deal of stiff action, as if he was repeating a speech out of a play. He stops, and appears embarrassed. Now he takes a book from the table, looks into it, sets it upright and open against the window, and proceeds again in his

recitation with renewed spirit. I think I can make out a G and an F . . . . Stay! Oh! I see—"Gay's Fables." Every now and then he stops, and looks anxiously up the street;—'tis by that way that his aunt always comes, and this is about the time that she usually pays her evening visit.

I have it! I have it!—He has some favour to ask of his aunt, and hopes to bribe her to grant it by repeating a newly-acquired fable of Gay, and by showing her, that he has passed the time of her absence in retracing her beloved resemblance. Oh! poor Willy! I fear, that if such is your intention, your portrait will be thought much too like to be pleasing. It seems, by his looking so often into the street, he is not aware that Sempronia has been in the house above this half-hour.

He begins to suspect it, for he puts his drawing into his pocket, gives a parting-look to his tawdry prints, takes up the box containing the empty colour-shells, and away he goes. The empty colour-shells! There then we have the key of the whole mystery. He is ambitious of making a picture all red and yellow, like his favourite prints, but his colour-shells must first be replenished; and this then is the favour, to obtain which he has given himself so much trouble.

Cordelia has just returned to the drawing-room. She is already gone again. She only looked at a card which was stuck over the mantel-piece, took a key from a bunch which was in the drawer of her writing-table, and immediately left the room with it.

Willy has entered the drawing-room. He has heard his aunt's voice in the adjoining closet, for he advances towards it. Probably the tone is not encouraging, for he hesitates, and opens the door softly and by degrees, in order to reconnoitre the field of action before he commences the attack. Sempronius looks as black as a live

lobster, and his sister as red as a boiled one. Willy seems not to admire the appearance of either, and draws his little curly head back again: but his aunt is already aware of the young spy's vicinity, and, before he can effect a retreat, she has taken him into custody. Now then, placing him between her knees, and compelling him to look her full in the face, (how can she be so barbarous?) she insists upon his making an exact confession. Perhaps she suspects that his mother had sent him to overhear what she was saying to Sempronius.

The poor child weeps, and protests his innocence. Now she loses all patience, and drags him by the arm to the window, which she opens. What! is she threatening to throw him out of it, unless he instantly confesses himself guilty? No, no; not so bad as that! She is only going to bring forward a proof of the truth of her charge so convincing, that there can be no denying it. She points to the story above; she holds a sheet of paper out of the window, and waves it, just as Willy did the portrait. She saw him then, and probably thought that he was making signs to somebody in the street. Did she take the paper for a letter? perhaps, too, for one written by his mother. Was there ever such a lynx in petticoats! I am half afraid that her keen eyes will discover me with my telescope at the garret-window, and then I shall be suspected to be the lover in this romance! Fortunately, this business can be easily explained. Don't be so frightened, my little friend; you need only put your hand in your left pocket, and your deceiver will be confounded.

And that is exactly what he does: with trembling hands he draws forth the last production of his genius. She opens it eagerly! Nay, there is certainly no mistaking the subject: and now, Willy, now there's a glorious subject for your pencil! Le Brun's Passions exhibit nothing to be compared with it! Unluckily, she

does not allow him time to study her. To tear the paper into a thousand pieces, to apply so hearty a slap on his cheek as left five white marks behind it, seize him by the arm, and turn him out of the room, slapping the door in his face, was the work of but a single minute. The unfortunate little artist retires sobbing, to mourn over the annihilation of all his air-built castles.

The closet conference too is at an end. Our beloved aunt has done all the mischief in her power, sees no prospect of doing more at present, and therefore takes her departure, quite satisfied with herself.

I assure you, my dear uncle, I do not like the look of this business at all. Cordelia went out just as the postman was going through the street: she sent the old footman back for something, and seized the moment of his absence to give a letter into the postman's care: there was a hurry in her manner of giving it, and she coloured so suddenly and so deeply, that I am certain there was some mystery in the business. In all probability, this letter was an answer to that which she received from the milliner. I begin to grow very uneasy: it is at least certain, that Cordelia carries on a correspondence, unknown to her husband, with some person in London, for it was not the general post by which the letter was forwarded.

Sempronius is still alone in his own room. He seems in a brown study: sometimes he walks up and down the chamber, rubbing his forehead with his hand thoughtfully: sometimes he beats the devil's tattoo, sitting in his elbow chair: at this moment he is playing upon the table with his fingers, but evidently without attending to what he is about.

Hark! a knock at his door. What! Sempronia returned so soon? It is very unusual for her to make two visits in one evening. What an air of triumph she

wears! She must have done some notable mischief, she looks so happy. She puts me in mind at this moment of her prototype—Milton's Serpent:

——"Hope elevates, and Joy
Brightens her crest."——

The door opens; she goes in, but her companion remains in the street. Surely, I have seen that fellow's face before: as I hope to live, the very post-man to whom Cordelia confided her letter! He is trying a piece of money with his teeth! A bribe, no doubt, and if the fellow received it from Sempronia, alas! for poor Cordelia's secret.

The aunt throws open the study door, and with a look of exultation slaps down a letter upon the table before her brother. He seizes it; he recognizes the hand-writing. I think I can see his hands tremble while he bursts the letter open.

Ha! something has fallen to the ground, which Sempronia possesses herself of without loss of time. She holds it up triumphantly to her brother. A key! Can it be that which I saw Cordelia even now take off the ring? The same idea has struck the amiable pair, for they are already in the drawing-room. The bunch of keys is in the hands of Sempronius. The look of anguish, with which he lets the bunch fall again, tells me too plainly that it is that very key.

Sempronia urges him to read the letter. To judge by his countenance, matters are now worse than ever. The note could have contained but a few words, for it was read in an instant, and if his sister had not stopped him in time, in another instant he would have torn it into a thousand pieces.

I suppose the postman is impatient, for he has just sent the maid-servant up with a message. She is gone down again with a small wax-light in her hand, which usually stands upon the chimney-piece. Sempronia picks up the bunch of keys, and replaces them in the

drawer. She takes the letter from her brother and examines it. She points to the superscription with an inquiring look. He shakes his head. No; he knows nothing of the person to whom the letter is addressed. Cordelia in secret correspondence with a person of whom her husband knows nothing? That looks very ill! And yet that person may be a woman. Come, my dear uncle, let us believe the best: when there are two sides of the question, I always prefer the most favourable; and to think an accused person in the right, till he is actually *proved* to be in the wrong, if not the most prudent plan as the world is constituted, at least is certainly the most amiable.

The maid returns with the wax-taper lighted. The letter is sealed again with one of Cordelia's own seals, which lay on the writing-table. Now then away stalks Sempronia. She restores the letter to the perfidious postman, who bows and leaves her; and now a corner of the street deprives my eyes of the pleasure of gazing upon this paragon of female chastity.

What do you think of all this, my dear uncle? That cursed key! I am horribly afraid that it was the key of some private entrance, of some back-door or garden-gate, and that the note specified the hour and day for using it: it could not have contained more from the short time occupied by its perusal. If this conjecture be just, Sempronius is as well informed of these particulars as either the writer or receiver of the letter; and, by his sending it to its destination, I conclude that he means the assignation to be kept. Is it his intention to surprise Cordelia with her unknown correspondent? It looks very like it.

At any rate, I hope that this important interview is not fixed for this evening, as business, which cannot be delayed, compels me to desert my post this very moment, and will prevent my resuming it till to-morrow; therefore, my dear uncle, I must beg you to supply my

place. I will leave you my telescope; keep a sharp look out, and then I shall at least have the satisfaction of learning, from your report to-morrow, everything which has taken place in Sempronius's family during my absence.

Saturday.

And so, my dear uncle, you are quite certain that I lost nothing by my absence yesterday evening? Nothing occurred worth noticing? Well then, let me see whether I can have better success in my discoveries.

Hey-day! the old footman is at the door, adjusting the stirrups of a little grey poney; and Sempronius is in the very act of drawing on his boots. He seems preparing to go a journey. Well then, this cannot possibly be the important day; for, so well informed as Sempronius is of the time of assignation, he certainly would take care not to be out of the way: and that he does not mean to return to-night, I conclude from his carrying saddle-bags.

However, he does not leave Cordelia's "fair side all unguarded *;" for his she-dragon of a sister is just arrived, and her maid follows her, carrying a bundle of clothes. Cordelia's maid appears, and the she-dragon's abigail is given in charge to her; so that, I conjecture, the sister-in-law is appointed to keep a strict eye over Cordelia's conduct, till her brother returns. Methinks, Cordelia does not seem quite pleased with this arrangement, though she strives to hide her dissatisfaction under the veil of civilities.

N.B. The she-dragon's abigail is almost as old, and quite as hideous as her mistress; to make her more so, was out of the power of nature.

Sempronius is gone. Cordelia is busied with household affairs. Our dearly-beloved aunt has fixed her

* Comus.

spectacles on her hawk's nose, and is knitting away as if her existence depended upon it. This day will probably be unproductive, but I will just look in upon you in the evening, my dear uncle.

Saturday afternoon.

Cordelia is more ornamented than usual; she has a turban on with a sultana plume, which becomes her singularly. Willy too has got his best clothes on. There is certainly something in the wind. His mother is reading to him out of the large Shakspeare, which I mentioned before, but she finds it difficult to make him attend to her; he jumps up every minute, and runs to look out of the window.

A quarter past six—stay! Have the goodness to hand me that newspaper, my dear uncle. Let me see—"Drury Lane—the Honeymoon." "Covent Garden—Macbeth." As sure as fate, they are going to see Macbeth, and Cordelia is trying to make her boy understand the story before they set out.

Just so. A plain decent-looking coach with two ladies and a gentleman in it, has just stopped at Cordelia's door. Cordelia takes her gloves and fan. She seems through civility to press her sister-in-law to join their party. How Miss Grimalkin turns up the white of her eyes! Ay, I warrant her! She looks upon a theatre as an invention of the wicked one, and would as soon set her foot in purgatory as in a playhouse. Cordelia and Willy leave her, and she ejaculates something as the door closes: but whether it be a prayer or a curse, I will not pretend to decide; for charity's sake we will believe the former.

The coach is gone, and I may as well go too; there is nobody at home but Sempronia, and, to the shame of my taste be it spoken, I have not the least inclination for a tête-à-tête with her. Good night, my dear uncle.

Saturday, 10 *o'clock.*

No wonder, my dear uncle, that you are surprised at my returning so unexpectedly: but, would you believe it? as I was on my way home even now, a man passed me, whom, in spite of his being muffled up in his great coat, and his having drawn his hat down over his eyes, I recognised for Sempronius!

I instantly turned and followed him. He stopped at his own house, and struck thrice with a pebble on the drawing-room window, in which there was a light. Instantly the light disappeared. In a minute after, the door was opened without noise; the candle in her hand showed me the figure of Sempronia. Her brother stole into the house without speaking, and the door was closed again, as softly as it had been opened.

Then this is the important moment after all! Cordelia looked at an invitation card: don't you recollect that circumstance? She was aware that her husband was engaged to pass a day in the country, and appointed the evening of it for her assignation. He, on his side, was aware of her arrangement, and pretended to keep his country engagement, in order that he might surprise her with her lover.

Poor, poor Cordelia! To be sure, her imprudence is highly blamable; but still, if she could but escape this once undiscovered, who knows but the recollection of her danger might induce her to reform altogether? Stay! stay! cannot I—Hang me, if I don't warn her.

Eleven o'clock.

I was too late! The play was over! Cordelia was gone, and I am returned fatigued to death.

See! see! Cordelia sits in her drawing-room. Nay, to warn her now, without making a tremendous bustle, would be impossible. She must take her chance. Poor, poor Cordelia!

What is she about? She takes papers out of a red morocco case which was deposited in her jewel-box; they seem to be bank-notes. Surely she cannot be meditating an elopement! She seals them up, and leaves the room.

Sempronia is not to be seen, nor her brother. The servants are gone to bed. Every thing seems to be dark and still in the house. Surely that confounded key was not the key of her bed-chamber! Such an imprudence would be quite unpardonable; especially as her bed-chamber is in the back part of the house, where I cannot see what goes forward.

Now would I give all that I am worth in the world (it would not be paying a very high price, heaven knows!) to ascertain what Sempronius is about at this moment! I warrant him he stands in some corner unobserved (just as I am doing), as attentive with his ears as I am with my eyes, listening for that which he is afraid to hear, and every instant in danger of betraying himself by the loud and anxious beating of his heart. Ah! if I am right in this conjecture, in spite of all his faults, I can't help pitying the poor miserable devil!

Ha! how is this? A faint ray of light plays upon the glass of the lumber-room windows! This is very unusual! What can any person want, at such a time of night, in this desolate apartment, which hardly any one enters even during the day? Can it be Willy, whose zeal for the fine arts has induced him to leave his bed at midnight, to prosecute his studies unknown to the family? No! the shadow thrown upon the side-wall is of too great a length to be Willy's. The person who carries the light, throws it on different parts of the chamber, as if examining whether it is already occupied by any one. Can it be Cordelia, in this solitary apartment—so late at night—her husband supposed at a distance—expecting some one to whom she sent a private key. Oh! if it is Cordelia, she must be guilty!

Guilty! guilty! I could discover in the shadow the peculiar form of the turban, and of the sultana plume with which it was decorated; they were marked out most distinctly. It is she—it is Cordelia: no, never again will I pin my faith upon a woman's virtue!

The door has been left ajar; purposely (I suppose), lest the lover should make a noise in opening it. I can see a faint light advancing along the landing-place. From the circular form of the radiance, I should imagine that it is produced by a dark lantern. Now it enters the room, and shows me the tall figure of a man wrapped up in a great coat. It seems, too, that Cordelia's maid is in her mistress's secrets; for the stranger is accompanied by a female, whose height, shape, and white petticoats, perfectly answer the description of Mrs. Betty.

Cordelia's rushlight is too near the window, and the beams of the dark-lantern are both too feeble and too far off, to permit my distinguishing the emotions produced by this mysterious meeting on the countenances of the lovers; not to mention that the gentleman's round hat shades a great part of his features, and that the lady's back is turned directly towards me; however, the eagerness with which Cordelia hastens to meet the stranger, and the tender attitude which he assumes without delay, leave me no doubt of their mutual satisfaction. He is already on his knees before her, and is pressing her unresisting hand to his lips most passionately: and this is the signal for the storm breaking loose, which is destined to overwhelm them. The worst fears of jealousy are confirmed beyond the power of doubting; mortal patience can endure no longer; a closet-door suddenly bursts open, and, like a clap of thunder, Sempronius stands in the midst of the affrighted group!

The whole party seems petrified, not excepting Mrs. Betty. Yes, yes, Mrs. Betty! I make no doubt that your mistress's secret-keeper had many a pretty perquisite, but now you must prepare yourself to look about for another place.

Oh! how Sempronius storms! How he threatens the lover! How he upbraids his wife! How, with his hands clasped together, he devotes himself to the infernal deities, if he does not take the most ample vengeance on the authors of his dishonour! The stranger seems to be converted into marble by this unexpected appearance, for he has not yet had the power of quitting his kneeling attitude.

Sempronius makes such an uproar that he will soon raise the whole house. The company is already increased by two new-comers, but their stature and shape easily enable me to recognise them for old acquaintances: the one is a large water-spaniel, which I have often seen running about the house; the other short figure, who holds a rushlight, and stands there astonished in his shirt, can be no other than Willy. I suppose his father's voice had broken his sleep, and made him tremble lest thieves should have found their way into the lumber-room, for the express purpose of carrying off such a treasure as his two darling pictures.

His entrance only seems to increase the displeasure of Sempronius. I think I can hear him cry at this distance, "What business have you out of bed, sir?" and at the same time he applies a hearty blow on the round cheek of poor Willy. The boy staggers under the effect of this uncivil salutation, and, fearful of a second, he hastens out of the room: only in his confusion mistaking the way out he suddenly pulls open the door of Edward's room, and—why, what the deuce have we got here! A sixth person has tumbled head foremost into the room. Willy has fallen undermost; the spaniel helps the general confusion by barking, and has established himself on the back of the outstretched intruder.

Willy has dragged himself from under his oppressor; he calls off the dog, raises the new-comer (who brings his garments hastily into order) and is rewarded for his kindness by a second sound box on the ear. No, fair

lady! (for it seems the intruder is a female,) even if that action had not revealed you, that shape and air are not to be mistaken: you can be no other than our dearly-beloved aunt. I suppose the kind soul was indulging her innocent curiosity to know how the storm would end, which she had been so instrumental in raising. With this view, she concealed herself in the adjoining bed-room; and she was in the very act of listening at the keyhole, with all her ears, when Willy unexpectedly pulled away the supporting door, and occasioned her to make her entrance into the society in a manner so novel and unceremonious.

This occurrence has the power of suspending even the torrent of Sempronius's resentment for a moment; the seducer has now recovered the use of his faculties, and has quitted his kneeling posture. He seems disposed to make use of the present confusion, in order to effect his escape. I saw Mrs. Betty whisper him, and I guess that it was a kind hint to seize the opportunity of withdrawing, for he pulls his hat still more over his eyes, and advances towards the door.

But Sempronius is aware of his intention; he springs after the fugitive, grasps him furiously by the arm, and forces him back into the middle of the chamber.

Now, shame on the dastardly wretch! The seducer falls at the feet of the man whom he has so grossly injured, and, with uplifted hands, seems to implore his compassion. And Cordelia—I am amazed at her assurance! she walks boldly up to her husband, as if she could justify what in itself is totally unjustifiable, or is she going honestly to avow her preference for the young offender, and her determination to set her husband's anger and the contempt of the world at defiance? I should rather suppose the latter; for, with a confident air, she extends her right hand to the kneeling stranger, and takes the dark lantern out of his! What is that for? Hey-dey! Now she pulls the seducer's hat off,

throws the light full upon his face, and shows her husband—huzza! huzza! huzza!—Edward, by heaven!

Virtuous Cordelia, what injustice have we all done you! How rejoiced am I to find myself mistaken; and Sempronius (I fancy) is by no means dissatisfied in finding a banished son where he expected to find a favoured lover! It is at least certain that he does not withdraw the hand which Edward has seized, and is in the act of pressing to his lips; and what makes me confident that his features have relaxed something of their severity is, that Mrs. Betty is disposed to profit by the present moment to obtain absolution for her own share in the business, and without more ceremony she plumps down on her knees, close by Edward. And now Cordelia, turning the lantern away from Edward's face, and throwing the light full upon her suppliant abigail's, discovers, not the features of Mrs. Betty, but those of a girl not more than seventeen, and lovely as the virgins of Mahomet's fabled paradise.

This, then, was the object of this midnight conference. While we fancied Edward many hundred miles distant from London, love had forbade his wandering further than the residence of his beloved: and for what purpose he sought it is now made quite evident, for he holds up the left hand of the fair stranger, and points to the ring, which ornaments the wedding finger. This important step once taken, he communicated it to his adopted mother; he entreated permission to make known to her the bride of his selection (perhaps) before he set forward to seek with her his fortune through the world. This request must certainly have been conveyed in the supposed love-letter, brought by the milliner's girl; the short space of time occupied in the perusal of her answer (as I said before) proved that it only contained a few words, probably nothing more than the time and place of meeting; and, as Sempronius was ignorant of the address on the back, Edward must have taken the pre-

caution of desiring his step-mother to direct to him under a feigned name, fearful lest his father, by some accident, should discover his being still in the metropolis, and prevent Cordelia from granting the so-much-desired meeting. The conversation which succeeded her return from the country, left me no doubt that all intercourse between his wife and son had been prohibited by the stern Sempronius. Cordelia was obliged to have recourse to mystery, however innocent her purpose; and the neglected lumber-room (as being least liable to observation from the servants) was fixed upon as the most fit place for the interview, at which she proposed not only to embrace her stepson's wife as her adopted daughter, but to smooth the difficulties of their road through life, by giving the new-married couple all the pecuniary assistance which it lay in her power to command. It was for this purpose that she sealed up the bank-notes so carefully; it was for this—but while I am making these reflections a most animated conference has taken place between the undeceived Sempronius and his amiable sister: he seems to reproach her and her misrepresentations, for having practised upon his foibles and rendered him so unjust to his wife, so harsh to his son, so contemptible in the eyes of them both, and even of himself. But the fair accused one does not listen to his remonstrances without evident signs of displeasure. She enters upon her defence with the more warmth, the less there is reason upon her side; he rejoins—she replies—with every moment their expostulations grow more vehement. But now Cordelia interposes like an angel of peace, gently places one white hand before the lips of her incensed husband, and extends the other, in sign of amity, to her embarrassed sister-in-law. It is received with an air of overstrained humility, that shows Miss Grimalkin would still be impertinent, if she dared; and now she thinks it full as well to take her departure, courtseying all around her repeatedly, and down to the

very ground, and taking care to display all those signs of ironical civility which convert the compliment into an insult. Now she has reached the door, and, turning her back most heroically upon the company with all the majesty of a turkey-cock, she gratifies me with her absence. Good night, thou model of stale virginity! Sleep soundly upon your well-earned laurels, and may your dreams be as sweet as your temper!

With her departure from our horizon all clouds seem to vanish. Her brother appears to be grown quite another man; his brow is so clear, his countenance is so much brightened, and his whole attitude expresses that he feels so much more at his ease. Now he embraces his charming wife, and that repentant kiss entreats her pardon of his unjust suspicions. Now he extends the hand of paternal forgiveness to his son, who presses it to his bosom with enthusiasm; and now, when Edward leads the partner of his heart towards him, does he not fold her to his bosom with all the tenderness of a father? Oh! how lovely appears this scene of domestic reconciliation, though acted in an old lumber-room, and only viewed by the unsteady glimmerings of a rushlight and a dark lantern.

You may as well lay down your pen, my dear uncle; there is nothing more to be seen: or, if there were, I could not see it, till the tears are wiped away which have dimmed my telescope. And now, thou happy family, for to-night farewell! Here I lay down the office of your historian: and, having now been for above two months Edward's most intimate confidant and warmest friend, to-morrow I'll set myself at work to become his acquaintance.

THE ANACONDA.

THE ANACONDA.

"She speaks poniards, and every word stabs."

Much Ado about Nothing.

"THE Lord in heaven forbid!" exclaimed the old man, while every limb was convulsed with horror, the blood forsook his cheeks, and he clasped his hands in agony: "but the thing is impossible!" he resumed, after a few moments passed in reflection, "absolutely impossible! What! Everard? a boy, whose childhood was passed under my own roof, under my very eye? whose manners are so mild; who was ever so gentle, so grateful, so kind; whose heart I know as well as I do my own. Bless my soul, sister Milman, what a fright you have given me! But it's no great matter now, for, when I reflect upon this history of yours, I see clearly that the thing is quite impossible, and so there's an end of it."

"Now was there ever anything so provoking! Brother, brother, let me tell you, that at your time of life it is quite a shame to suffer yourself to be so blinded by prejudice. His childhood was passed under your roof, forsooth! but where did he pass his youth, I should be glad to know? why, among tigers and alligators that swallow up poor dear little children at a mouthful, and

great ugly black-a-moor monsters, who eat nothing but human flesh, heaven bless us! and where's the great wonder, that living in such graceless company Everard should have picked up some of their bloody tricks? Nay, brother, to tell you a bit of my mind, for my own part I always suspected, that there was something awkward in the manner by which he came by such a sight of money; though, to be sure, I never imagined that the business was half so bad as it proves to be."

"Proves to be, sister! proves to be, indeed! Let me remind you that you have proved nothing, though God knows you have asserted enough to make every hair on my head stand an end: and, as to his fortune, I make no doubt that Everard can give as satisfactory an account of his making it, as the honestest man within the bills of mortality."

"I should be glad to know then, why he so obstinately refuses to give any account at all? It's above a year since he returned from the East Indies, and yet there isn't a human being a bit better informed on the subject than we were on the first day of his landing; though I'm sure it's not for want of asking, for many and many a good hour have I passed in pumping, and pumping, and yet here do I sit at this moment no whit the wiser! He always puts on such a solemn look, and takes the first opportunity of turning the conversation to something else: nay, the other day, when I wouldn't be fobbed off with a cock-and-a-bull story about heaven knows what, and put the question home to him in so many words,—'By what means did you, Everard Brooke, get so much money?' he turned his back plump upon me, and stalked out of the room; which was no great proof of his good-breeding, you'll say; but mercy upon us! good-breeding isn't what the gentleman values himself upon, for it was but last Friday that he bounced out of the room to call Towser off, who was barking at a little dirty beggar-boy, though he saw that I had dropped

my teaspoon, and was obliged to stoop for it myself! a great bear! but indeed I expected nothing better from a man who has lived so long among Hottentots."

"Well, sister! I dare say that he ought to have stopped to pick up your teaspoon; though to be sure I can't find in my heart to blame him very much for having gone first to rescue the beggar-boy, being afraid that I should have committed exactly the same fault myself. But you know I never pretended to good-breeding, and in all matters of politeness, sister Milman, I must give way to your better judgment and experience. However, I cannot be equally submissive respecting the material point; and in spite of all that you have advanced I must still maintain my opinion, that Everard came by his money honestly, whatever you may have heard to the contrary."

"Then why won't he let a body know how he came by it? Let me tell you, brother, that when a man has anything good to tell of himself, he isn't so fond of holding his tongue; nay, for that matter, to hold one's tongue at all isn't natural, and I warrant you, whoever does so has some good reason at bottom for submitting to such a disagreeable restraint, if one could but get him to own it: and so think the Williamsons, and the Joneses, and my cousin Dickins, and all the family of the Burnabys: for I am not of so uncommunicative a temper as your darling Everard, Heaven be praised for it! No; if I get a bit of information, I am too generous to keep it to myself, and have no peace, till all my neighbours are as well informed as I am. So this morning, I no sooner got possession of this bloody story, than I ordered my chariot, and drove round the village to communicate it to all our friends and relations. To be sure, they were mightily shocked at the account, as who wouldn't be? But they confessed, that they always expected to find something wrong at the bottom of this mystery, and they think it a mercy that I should have discovered the truth,

before things were gone too far between Everard and your daughter Jessy."

"And so you have been carrying this fine story all round the village? I protest now, sister Jane, it seems to me, that you have been giving yourself a great deal of very unnecessary trouble; and if, after all, your assertions should prove to be unfounded, I know not what recompence you can make poor Everard for this attempt to blast his character. The most innocent circumstances may be so construed as to wear an awkward appearance: there are always enough ill-natured people in the world ready to spread about scandalous reports, and Everard has too much merit not to have excited plenty of enemies; and here you have just now picked up a strange, unaccountable, rigmarole tale from one of these, and——"

"From one of his enemies," exclaimed Mrs. Milman, fanning herself violently; "very fine truly! when I heard the whole story with these ears of mine from the mouth of his own little coffee-coloured barbarian! Yes, to be sure! Mirza is a violent enemy of Mr. Everard's, that cannot be denied!"

The old merchant's face underwent a considerable change at hearing these last sentences; he looked distressed, and rubbed his forehead for some moments in evident anxiety.

"Mirza!" he repeated after a pause; "sister Jane, recollect yourself; this is no trifling matter! are you quite sure that Mirza asserts the truth of the story which I have just heard you relate?"

"I tell you, brother, for the second time, that I heard him tell it with my own ears! not indeed all at once, for the wicked little heathen knew too well how little it was to his master's credit that the fact should get abroad. Ah! he is a cunning hand, I promise you! But I went round about, and round about, and wormed and wormed, and kept beating the bush, till I got it all out of him. I confess I was obliged to promise faith-

fully that his master should never know a syllable about it, for he said that it would give him pain to hear it mèntioned, as to be sure well it may; but, when I found what a horrible secret it was, I had a great deal too much conscience to keep my promise, and lost no time in making the monster's guilt known to the whole neighbourhood."

"Well, well, sister! I won't pretend to say that you did wrong, and I doubt not you acted from the best motives; but yet I can't help wishing that you had acted otherwise! This Everard—poor, dear, wicked fellow—he was once so good, so affectionate; I would have betted all I have in the world, that it wasn't in his nature to kill so much as a fly; and to murder a woman—a woman too that he had promised to marry!"

"Aye! and to murder her in such a shocking manner too! first to shoot at her from behind a hedge, and when he found the poor creature was only wounded, to have the heart to run up to her, and actually beat her brains out with a club! Why, Mirza said, that he verily believed that she was above half an hour dying."

"I never heard of anything so horrible."

"But what is worst, he wasn't contented with destroying the poor girl's body; he had previously ruined her precious soul! It seems that her name was Nancy O'Connor; an Irish family, I suppose. I once knew an Irish officer of that name myself. I was but a girl then, and danced with him at the Hackney Assembly, and a mighty genteel comely-looking man he was, though he had but one eye; but that's neither here nor there. Well, as I was telling you, this Nancy was either the daughter or the wife of a rich planter, with whom Everard lived as clerk, or factor, or something of that kind. Well! and so this poor girl fell in love with Everard, and he on his side was wonderfully attentive to Nancy; for Mirza says, that he passed whole days and nights in watching her, and ogling her, so that she actually could

hardly stir without his knowing it; till at last he worked himself so totally into her good graces, and got such an influence over her mind, that (knowing his patron to have made a will entirely in Nancy's favour) he persuaded her to poison poor Mr. O'Connor, in order that she might share his wealth with her abominable lover."

"Poison her father! monstrous!"

"Her father, or her husband, for (as I said before) I am not certain which; but I should rather suppose it was her father, for it seems the poor deceived old man made it his dying request to her, that she should make Everard her husband as soon as ever the funeral was over: so you may judge how artfully the hypocrite must have played his cards! Well! now it was supposed that Everard would immediately have made Nancy Mrs. Brooke: the settlements were all drawn up; the clothes were bought; the wedding-day was fixed: when, lo and behold, what do you think the ungrateful monster did? He persuaded the poor young creature to dispose of all her property; and when it was converted into money, and jewels, and such-like, he enticed her into a wood, where he robbed and murdered her in the manner which you have just heard; and then, getting on board a vessel with his plunder in all haste, he managed to escape from Ceylon, before the officers of justice had time to discover what was become of him! The only thing which surprises me is, that he should have brought away Mirza with him; but as the young heathen was then quite a child, I suppose his master thought it probable that he knew nothing of this bloody business, or would certainly forget it during the voyage. And now, brother, what have you to say in behalf of your fine Mr. Everard? Ah! how often have I told you, over and over again, I was certain that something bad would come out against him all in good time! But you were obstinate; you still let him come dangling about your house, and keep hankering and hankering after your daughter Jessy; and

now you may think yourself well off if the girl's heart isn't fixed upon having the vagabond, and getting her brains knocked out in her turn, like poor Miss Nancy O'Connor."

Partial as the old man was to Everard, he could not but feel his faith in him a good deal shaken by this long string of horrible circumstances, and by the positive manner in which they were advanced. And now flocked in one after another the Joneses, and the Williamsons, and all the family of the Burnabys, with their wondering, and their blessing themselves, and their exclamations, and their pity for poor Miss O'Connor, and their having long suspected nothing better. The good old man listened in silence, and sighed, while they assailed him thus on all sides; but though he could not venture to contradict them, he could not find in his heart to join in their censures of the man whom he had so long esteemed, and whom he still loved so tenderly. But when at length cousin Dickins made his appearance, (a man of great importance in this family, for he was rich, a bachelor, advanced in years, and Jessy's godfather,) and announced his thorough belief in Mrs. Milman's story, it was no longer in old Elmwood's power to remain neutral in the business. He declared his submission to cousin Dickins' better judgment, and his intention of declining any further communication with Mr. Brooke; for he no longer dared to call him by the familiar and affectionate appellation of Everard.

This declaration was received with great satisfaction by all present, and the resolution was pronounced *nem. con.* to be extremely judicious: the delinquent was at this time in London, whither he had repaired (as it was suspected) for the purpose of ascertaining the exact state of his property, in order that on his return he might lay it before Elmwood, acompanied by a formal demand of his daughter's hand. This absence was thought very fortunate by the company, as it afforded the best oppor-

tunity for putting Jessy upon her guard; and it was determined to summon her without loss of time, make known to her the true character of the man with whom she had so imprudently been suffered to associate, and insist upon her making a solemn promise in full convocation, that she would from that moment give up all communication with him.

Jessy made her appearance. Alas! the fate of her heart had been long decided. As she listened to the strange and horrible tale, she sometimes coloured with indignation against the accusers, and then again her cheeks grew pale through fear lest the accusation should prove well founded. The charge was concluded; the promise was demanded; yet still Jessy spoke not, but sat absorbed in terror and grief. In vain was her lover's guilt repeated; in vain was she called upon to declare her abhorrence of him; still Jessy only answered with her tears. Her friendly relations turned up the white of their eyes at her blindness and delusion; Mrs. Milman was loud in exclaiming against the obstinacy and wrong-headedness of young people, who would fancy themselves wiser than their parents; and the formidable cousin Dickins, assuming one of his most severe and dignified looks, insisted upon her giving an immediate answer.

Terrified almost out of her senses at this formal address, the trembling Jessy now contrived to sob out "a hope that her aunt had been mistaken, that Everard would still be able to prove his innocence."—"Innocence!" so impossible a supposition was of itself sufficient to set the whole assembly in an uproar: the Williamsons, the Joneses, Cousin Dickins, and all the family of the Burnabys, gave tongue at once; and above a dozen voices were still busy in affixing the least flattering epithets possible to the name of Everard, when the door opened, and Everard himself stood before them. He was just returned from London, and had hastened to assure himself of Jessy's welfare. In the next moment you might

have heard a pin drop. The debate had been carried on in too loud a tone to permit his being ignorant of the nature of their discourse; but, at all events, the evident and universal embarrassment which his presence created, left him no doubt that himself had been brought upon the carpet, and that in a manner by no means to his credit. His sun-burnt cheek glowed with indignation, as he gazed round the circle, and requested to know the meaning of those appellations by which, while ascending the stairs, he had heard himself described.

The question being general, no person thought it necessary to take it to himself. Each looked towards his neighbour, as if he expected the answer to come from thence, and consequently all continued silent. Everard now found it needful to particularize, and turning to Cousin Dickins (whose voice had been supereminently loud) he demanded of him the desired explanation.

"Why, really, sir," stammered out Cousin Dickins, adjusting his neckcloth, in order to conceal his embarrassment; "really, Mr. Everard—as to what was said—I can only say—that I said nothing—that is to say, not that I quite said nothing—though, to say truth, it was almost as good as nothing—for it was nothing from my own knowledge—I only repeated—I only observed—that, if what Mrs. Milman said was true—"

"Mrs. Milman?" interrupted Everard; "that's enough; now then we get a step nearer to the source of the business. Will you then, madam, have the goodness to explain your reason for applying such opprobrious epithets to the name of Everard Brooke?—a name which, I am bold to say, deserves them as little as that of any person in this society. I wait for your reply, madam."

"Well, sir, and by my faith you shall have it," answered Mrs. Milman, who by this time had recovered herself, and was now resolved to carry the business through with flying colours, by assuming a double

quantity of assurance. "You shall have it, never fear! and if it turns out that your name is really as good as any one's in the company, and that you really did not poison the old gentleman, and beat Miss Nancy's brains out, why then so much the better for you, that's all, and there's no harm done."

"Poison the old gentleman? Beat out Miss Nancy's brains? What Miss Nancy? What old gentleman? Why, in the name of Heaven, Mrs. Milman, where did you pick up this farrago of nonsense?"

"I pick up, indeed! Let me tell you, sir, that I never picked up anything, or anybody in my life; and that if you talk of picking up, you are the much more likely person to pick up of the two. And now I'm about it, I'll let you into another piece of my mind. It's extremely rude in you to call my conversation a *farrago of nonsense;* but truly it's no wonder, for I'm not the first lady that you have treated with rudeness, Heaven knows! and more's the pity—Miss Nancy for that."

"Miss Nancy again!" exclaimed Everard, "and who the devil then is Miss Nancy?"

"What then you don't know Miss Nancy? No; never heard of Miss Nancy O'Connor, I warrant?"

"No, madam; I never did."

"Well, come, now, that is a good one! To beat a lady's brains out, and then to cut her acquaintance, and pretend you know nothing about her, is the finest piece of modern good-breeding that I ever heard of! Nay, indeed, I never expected much good-breeding from you, sir, ever since that affair of the teaspoon. But one thing I can tell you; your little copper-coloured Hottentot, Mirza, sings a very different song from you on this occasion; for I had the whole story from his own lips."

"From Mirza's? impossible!"

"It's not mighty polite in you to contradict one so plump, sir, but no matter for that, I repeat it; Mirza told me himself that you had poisoned a gentleman, and

beat his daughter's brains out; and now so much for that, and butter for fish. Nay, if you don't choose to believe me, call the boy hither, and ask him; I desire no better, and I see him playing in the garden at this moment."

"And it shall be done instantly!" cried Everard, at the same time throwing up the window—"Mirza! Mirza!"

Mirza was soon in the room.

"Pray, Mirza, what is the meaning—" began Everard, but Mrs. Milman immediately interrupted him.

"Silence, if you please, sir; I'll examine the boy myself. Come here, Mirza; well, and how d'ye do, my dear? Pray, Mirza, what was that pretty story you told me this morning about poisoning somebody, and killing somebody with a club, and—"

"Oh! Missy, Missy!" cried Mirza, "you no say dat! Massa tell me no talk—Massa grieve—Massa angry."

"No, no, child; he'll not be angry. He wants to hear how prettily you tell the story, and so you must tell it all; mustn't he, Mr. Brooke?" Everard gave a sign of assent. "You know, Mirza, it was all about how your master made his fortune; well, and so, Mirza, (upon my word, you're a very nice lad, and there's sixpence for you,) well, and so you say, Mirza, and so you say, my dear, that your master killed her in a wood! what? did he kill her quite?"

"Iss, quite! she quite dead! Massa beat brains out wid great club!"

"I, Mirza?" exclaimed Everard; "did I?"

"Iss, dad you did, Massa! and God him bless you for it!"

"Bless him for it!" whispered Mrs. Milman to Cousin Dickins, "there's fine morality! the wicked little heathen! but you'll hear more presently!" then turning again to the boy; "well but, Mirza, you told me something too about poisoning—what, I suppose, before your master killed Miss Anne O'Connor."

"Conda! Conda!" interrupted the boy.

"Condor, was it?" repeated Mrs. Milman: "well, well, Connor or Condor, the name makes no great difference. Well, Mirza, and so you say, that this Anne O'Condor, instigated by your master, I suppose."

"Oh! my massa! my massa!" shrieked Mirza in a tone of agony, at the same time pointing to Everard; who, pale as death, and with a countenance expressing the most painful agitation, rushed to a table on which stood a decanter of water, of which he hastily swallowed a draught; though so violently did his hands shake that the goblet was carried to his lips with difficulty.

"Forgive my leaving you so abruptly," said he, in a faltering voice; "I will return in a few minutes;" and he hastily quitted the apartment, followed by Mirza.

Now then his guilt was past doubting! Mrs. Milman spread out her petticoats, fanned herself with an air of triumph, and began a sermon upon the wonderful effects of conscience. Surprise had checked the course of Jessy's tears; the blood had deserted her lips and cheeks, and she sat motionless, looking like a marble statue. The good old Elmwood felt in his own the wound which his darling's heart had just received; but he had nothing to offer for her relief, except a fond pressure of her hand, and a sigh of compassion. The rest of the company shrugged up their shoulders at the depravity of human nature, and nodded their head significantly at one another, as if they had been so many Chinese josses. Suddenly the door opened; and Mrs. Milman was still in the full flow of her eloquence, when Everard re-entered the room, to all appearance perfectly recovered from his late disorder.

"Mrs. Milman," said he, "I am now master of the whole of this business. Your ignorance of circumstances peculiar to the East, the singularity of my adventures, and the broken English in which you heard them related, have led you into a most extraordinary mistake. I cannot clear it up, without subjecting myself to the most

agonizing recollections, and rending open afresh those wounds, which, it's true, are scarred over, but which are too deep and too deadly to be ever thoroughly healed. If, therefore, the opinion of the world were alone concerned, that opinion which is so little necessary to my own happiness, I should leave you in your error, rather than subject myself to the pain of an explanation. But I see in this circle two persons, one of whom possesses too dear an interest in my affections to permit my leaving a single thorn in her gentle bosom which I have it in my power to remove; while the paternal kindness which the other showed to me while I was still a boy, demands that I should convince him that it was not shown to one unworthy. To calm their feelings, I will sacrifice my own; and, much as I shall suffer while making the recital, the recital of my adventures shall still be made. Be attentive then, and everything shall be explained."

Curiosity now became the predominant expression—Elmwood breathed freer, held up his head higher than before, and shook his daughter's hand affectionately; a roseate blush stole over the lovely fair face of Jessy, while a look of silent gratitude thanked her father; the rest of the company drew their chairs closer together, and prepared to listen with all their ears.

Everard seated himself, and thus began.

You are already aware that my fortune was made in the island of Ceylon. It was there that I was so lucky as to find employment in the house of a man whose virtues rendered him as much the object of universal esteem, as the favours which he conferred upon me entitled him to my peculiar gratitude. I was engaged by him as his secretary, but all other names were soon forgotten by us both in that of friends. He was an Englishman as well as myself, and perhaps this had no

slight influence in producing so strict an intimacy between us. A variety of untoward circumstances had compelled him to abandon his native land, and sail in pursuit of fortune to the East. His toil had not been vain: the capricious goddess, who fled from him with such disdain in Europe, now showered her favours upon his head with the most unwearied profusion. He had consumed but a few years in Ceylon, and was already rich and possessed of a distinguished situation. It seemed as if fortune was at length resolved to convince the world, that she was not always blind; for, had she searched the whole island through, she would have found it difficult to bestow wealth and honour upon a wiser or a better man. But, of all his treasures, that which he counted most precious, that for which he thanked Heaven's bounty at every moment of his existence, and with every pulsation of his heart, was a wife who united all the beauty and graces of her sex with all the firmness and judgment of ours. One only blessing was denied them: Louisa was not a mother.

My friend and patron (his name was Seafield) possessed a villa at a small distance from Columbo. The place, it's true, was of no great extent, but it united, in their fullest perfection, all those charms which render Nature in that climate so irresistible an enchantress. This was Seafield's most beloved residence, and hither he hastened whenever the duties of his station permitted his absenting himself for a few days from Columbo: in particular, there was a small circular pavilion designed by his own hand, and raised under his own inspection, to which he was particularly partial, and in which he was accustomed to pass the greatest portion of his time. It stood some few hundred yards from the dwelling-house, and was situated on a small eminence, whence the prospect over land and sea was of a description rich, varied, and extensive. Around it towered a thick circle of palm trees, resembling a colonnade: their leafy fans

formed a second cupola above the roof; and, while they prevented a single sun-beam from piercing through the coolness of their embowering shades, their tall and slender stems permitted not the eye to lose one of the innumerable charms afforded by the surrounding landscape.

This delightful spot happened to be the residence of Seafield's whole family, when accidental business of importance required Louisa's presence at Columbo. Conscious that her husband considered every day as lost which he was compelled to pass at a distance from his beloved retreat, she positively refused his attendance, but accepting me as her escort she departed for the city. Diligence and impatience to return home enabled her to despatch her affairs in less time than she had expected them to occupy; and in the very first moment that she found herself once more at liberty, she ordered the palanquins to be prepared, and her slaves to hold themselves in readiness for departing. Our journey was performed by night, for the double purpose of reaching home the sooner, and of escaping the ardour of the noonday sun. We arrived an hour after day-break, yet Seafield was already abroad.

"As usual, he ascended the hill to enjoy the beauty of the rising-sun." Thus said Zadi, Seafield's old and attached domestic; in whose favour his master made an exception to his general opinion, that, in all their transactions with Europeans, the natives of this island were totally devoid of gratitude, honesty, and good faith.

"We shall find him in the pavilion, then?" said Louisa.

"Not an hour ago I left him there writing," was the answer.

"We will go thither and surprise him," she said, addressing herself to me. "Wait here while I change my dress; a few moments will suffice for my toilet, and I shall expect to find you here when I return."

In the mean while, I remained leaning against one of the columns which supported the small portico by which the door was sheltered. From hence I enjoyed an uninterrupted view of the hill and its pavilion, which, surrounded by its light and beautiful garland of palm trees, attracted the sight irresistibly. While my eye dwelt with satisfaction on their broad sheltering heads, I fancied that I could discover a large excrescence upon the stem of one of them, extremely unusual in those trees, which in general rear themselves perpendicularly towards the sky, regular and straight as the pillars of a colonnade. It resembled a large branch, extending from one stem to its neighbour; and what puzzled me more in this appearance, was, that it seemed occasionally to be waved backwards and forwards, though the breathing of the sea-gale was so gentle, that it scarcely moved the leaves on the neighbouring branches. I made a variety of guesses to account for this phenomenon, but every thing which my memory or my imagination could suggest, seemed inadequate to solve this difficulty entirely to my satisfaction.

I was still puzzling myself with conjectures, when Zadi drew near me with some slight refreshments. I pointed to the branch, whose apparent motion had excited so much of my attention, and inquired, whether he could at all account for the strong effect produced upon it by the sea-breeze, while the slighter boughs were so gently agitated. He immediately turned himself towards the palm trees; but no sooner did his eye rest upon the spot in question, than the silver basket with its contents dropped from his hands, the paleness of death spread itself over his swarthy countenance; he caught at one of the columns, to save himself from falling on the ground; and, while his eyes expressed the deepest horror and consternation, he pronounced with difficulty—"The Anaconda!—that is the Anaconda! We are undone!"

What could have produced an effect so sudden and so violent upon a man, whom I well knew to inherit from nature the most determined courage, and most remarkable self-possession, was to me absolutely incomprehensible. But though I was ignorant of its cause, the sight of his extreme alarm was almost sufficient to shake my own presence of mind. I saw that he was on the point of sinking on the earth, overpowered by his emotions. I sprang towards him, and caught him in my arms.

"For the love of heaven," I exclaimed, "compose yourself, old man! Tell me what terrifies you thus. What mean you by the anaconda? What can occasion these complaints, and this alarm?"

He endeavoured to recover himself; he strove to speak, but in vain; and, before I could understand the accents of his stammering tongue, Louisa joined us, and without observing the slave's agitation put her arm within mine, and advanced towards the pavilion. This action seemed to restore to Zadi the lost powers of his body and mind. With a loud cry he threw himself on his knees before us, and in words interrupted by sobs, and accompanied by tears, he forbade our crossing the threshold.

"Your first step without these walls," he exclaimed, "leads to inevitable destruction. Every door must be bolted; every window must be barred. This mansion must resemble a sepulchre, where nothing living is to be found."

And, while he spoke, he hastily closed and locked the folding-doors, through which we had a prospect of the pavilion. Louisa observed his singular behaviour, and the agitation of his countenance, with looks which expressed the most lively astonishment.

"Are you distracted, Zadi?" she asked, after a few moments. "What mean these tears, and these ex-

pressions so alarming? and why do you forbid our going to your master?"

"You're going to ——? Almighty God! My master! He is yonder! Oh! he is lost!—he is lost beyond the power of saving!"

"He is lost, say you? Answer me, old man! What mean you? What fear you? Oh! how my heart beats with terror!"

Her frame trembled with anxiety, while she gazed with wide-stretched eyes upon the messenger of evil tidings, and pressed my arm with a convulsive grasp.

"Recollect yourself, my good Zadi!" said I; "what is this anaconda, which you speak of with such terror? I have seen nothing except the branch of a palm tree, which the wind moved backwards and forwards, singularly enough, it's true, but still there was nothing in it alarming."

"Not alarming?" repeated the Indian, wringing his hands; "not alarming? The Lord have mercy on me, miserable old man! Ah! Mr. Everard, that branch of the palm tree! Alas! alas! it is no branch! It is a snake! a terrible snake! We call it an anaconda, and its kind is in size the most enormous, in nature the most fierce, and in appetite the most ravenous, of any to be found through all Ceylon! See! see!" he continued, approaching one of the windows, "see how the monster plays among the branches! It always twines and twists itself into those folds, and knots, and circles, when it prepares to dart itself upon the ground, like lightning, to seize its prey! Oh! my master! my poor dear master! He never can escape! Nothing can save him!"

Half of this alarming explanation was more than enough to throw the wretched Louisa into a state of distraction. Her features so distorted by terror, that she was scarcely to be known for the same woman, her

eyes stretched almost to breaking, and her hands folded together with as strong a grasp as if she meant them never to be again separated, she exclaimed, in a voice so hollow and so expressive of suffocation that it pierced her hearers to the very heart, "my husband!—my beloved! Oh! help me to save him, good, good men! Forsake him not! Oh! forsake him not!"

But at this moment the wife required assistance not less than the husband. Overpowered by her sensations, she fainted in my arms; Zadi flew to summon her female attendants; and I bore the pale insensible Louisa back to her own apartment, though Zadi's dreadful narrative had almost deprived me of animation myself.

Our endeavours to re-kindle the extinguished flame of life were at length successful. Her eyes opened; she cast around her a look of apprehension.

"Oh! why are you still here?" said she to me in a feeble voice. "Is his life then of so little consequence? Fly to his succour! Rescue him, or let me die! In preserving him, you will preserve me: if he perishes, I am lost!"

"He lives! he lives! heaven be thanked! he still lives!" thus shouted the faithful Zadi, as he rushed into Louisa's apartment. His anxious vigilance had induced him to examine every part of the mansion, and ascertain with his own eyes that it was perfectly secure against danger. He now returned out of breath from the balcony, whence he had discovered to his great satisfaction, that his view was unimpeded over the whole pavilion. He remarked, that the door and all the windows (as far as the power of vision extended) were closely fastened; and hence he very reasonably concluded, that his master had been aware of the enemy's approach in full time to take every necessary precaution for his safety.

"Hear you that, my dear lady?" I exclaimed, while I took Louisa's hand; "surely, this intelligence is alone sufficient to restore your strength and tranquillity. We

had nothing to apprehend for Seafield, except his being surprised by the monster while unprepared. But you see that he has had time to shut out the danger: he has now nothing to do but to remain quietly within his retreat, and the snake will either not discover his being so near, or at any rate will be unable to break through the bulwarks which separate them. The whole business therefore is a disagreeable blockade for an hour, or perhaps less; at the end of which the anaconda will grow weary of waiting for its prey, and by retiring to seek it in some other quarter, will release our friend, and then we shall be quit for the fright."

The satisfaction with which I thus endeavoured to re-assure the agonized heart of Louisa, was thoroughly established in my own. But Zadi, whose own feelings were too much agitated by his master's situation to permit his attending to those of others, hastened with too little consideration to destroy the hope, which I so fondly indulged, and with which I strove to soothe the afflicted wife.

"Oh! no, no, no!" he exclaimed; "we must not reckon upon the snake's leaving us so soon! When the anaconda has once chosen a group of trees for her abode, and is seen to sport among their branches, in the manner in which we saw her amusing herself, she will remain there for whole days and weeks watching patiently for her prey, till every chance of success fails her, and absolute famine compels her to emigrate: but her capacity of existing without food is almost inconceivable, and till she removes of her own free will, no human power is able to drive her from her retreat."

"Almighty Powers!" stammered out the trembling Louisa: "then he is lost indeed! Even should those slight barriers be sufficient to protect him from the monster's fury, he must still at last fall a prey to the assaults of hunger!"

My frowning looks easily made the old man aware of

the imprudence which he had just committed: but the mischief was irreparable. Every thing, which his imagination could suggest to soften the effect produced by his ill-judged confession, was unable to blunt the arrow, which had carried with it into the heart of his mistress the poison of despair.

"But after all," said I," why are we to take it for granted that our friend is actually exposed to this urgent danger? By your own account, Zadi, above an hour had elapsed between your leaving your master in the pavilion, and your discovery of the Anaconda; and what then can be more likely than that the day being so delightful, he should have gone out to walk, and have quitted the pavilion before the snake's approach?"

"Angel of comfort!" exclaimed Louisa, while she seized my hand, and pressed it to her lips; "blessed, ever blessed be you for that suggestion! Why should it not be, as you suppose? Why should not his absence have rescued him?"

"Ah! dear heaven!" sighed the old man, and shook his head; "the doors closed, the windows all fastened—"

"Prove nothing," I interrupted him; "when did Seafield ever leave his favourite retreat without taking those precautions? Perhaps, at this very moment that we are trembling for his safety, he is at the distance of miles from the place of danger! Perhaps, nothing more is requisite for his full security than that we should take the precaution of warning him in time, lest he should return to the dangerous pavilion instead of coming straight to the house. Come, come, Zadi; let us hasten to find him! Summon together all the male domestics, as well as our palanquin-bearers; let us divide them into small parties and send them into every path, by which it is possible for Seafield to regain the hill."

"Yes, hasten! hasten!" cried Louisa; "the thought that you may come too late, pierces me to the very soul; yet on his having already quitted the pavilion hangs my

whole, my only hope! Hasten, friends! oh! hasten to find him!"

Her eagerness would not suffer us to remain a moment. We consigned her to the care of her female attendants. We then collected the male inhabitants of the house together with all speed, and having armed them in the best manner that time would permit, we approached in different quarters as near the fatal hill, as the protecting shelter of trees and branches would allow us, without running the risk of being discovered by the anaconda. Zadi remained with me.

On our way, I endeavoured to compose my thoughts, and to make myself master of every particular respecting the danger, to which the friend of my heart was exposed. My own alarm, and Louisa's presence, had hitherto prevented my obtaining a thorough knowledge of the nature of Seafield's situation, and what he had to apprehend: but, now that I was alone with him, I lost no time before I questioned Zadi.

"You see, old man," said I, "how your fatal outcry, 'an anaconda,' has palsied every soul through excess of terror. Now your imprudence will have been most unpardonable, should it turn out that you spoke without being quite certain of the fact, or if you should be found through your own natural timidity to have exaggerated the danger. Recollect yourself, therefore, and then answer me calmly and frankly. Are you positive, that what you saw was really an anaconda; and in the dreadful account which you have just given of her, have you not in some degree overstepped the limits of truth?"

"Sir," answered the good old man, "though it were the last word which I have to utter in this world, I should still repeat my former assertions. Why, the very name of this creature is enough to make every native of this island feel the blood freeze in his veins! and that I have not deceived myself, is, alas! but too certain. I have already seen the anaconda twice at no greater distance

than now; though never one of such a monstrous length and thickness as that which is at present before us. This country would speedily become a wilderness, if fortunately these reptiles were not very rarely met with; for in general they remain concealed within the recesses of the deepest woods; there clinging round the branches of some gigantic tree, they remain waiting with inexhaustible patience for an opportunity of darting down upon their prey, the first man or animal who is unlucky enough to pass beneath them. How it happens, that this snake should have advanced so far into the open country, is what I can least comprehend: but as the rainy season is but just over, it is most probable, that she has been swept away by the irresistible violence of some of the mountain-torrents."

During this conversation we had continued to advance under favour of the thick-woven underwood, till we were scarcely more than a hundred paces distant from the monster. We could now examine it with the most perfect distinctness, and the eye was able to take in at once the whole extent of its gigantic structure. It was a sight calculated to excite in equal degrees our horror and our admiration: it united the most singular and brilliant beauty with every thing that could impress the beholder with apprehension; and, though while gazing upon it I felt that every limb shuddered involuntarily, I was still compelled to own, that never had I witnessed an exhibition more fascinating or more gratifying to the eye.

The anaconda was still employed in twisting itself in a thousand coils among the palm-branches with such restless activity, with rapidity so inconceivable, that it was frequently impossible for the sight to follow her movements. At one moment, she fastened herself by the end of her tail to the very summit of the loftiest tree, and, stretched out at her whole length, swung backwards and forwards like the pendulum of a clock, so that her head almost seemed to graze the earth beneath her; then

in another, before the eye was aware of her intention, she totally disappeared among the leafy canopies. Now she slid down the stem, winding herself round and round it; and now again only the extremity of her tail remained twisted round the root, while she stretched out her body upon the grass, and with elevated head and high-arching neck described a large or a small circle, as her capricious pleasure prompted.

These latter movements gave us an opportunity to discriminate with more exactness (during a few seconds at a time) the singular richness and beauty of her tints. The long slender body was covered with a net-work of glittering scales, girdling it round with rings above rings, and effectually securing it against every attack. The head was of a yellowish green, and marked in the middle of the skull with a large dark spot, from whence small stripes of pale yellow were drawn down to the jaws. A broad circle of the same colour went round the throat like a necklace, on either side of which were two olive-coloured patches, in shape resembling shields. Along the back ran a chain of black waves with sharp-pointed edges, from whence on both sides narrow flesh-coloured rings and broad bands of the brightest yellow (alternately and in the most regular order)descended in zigzag fashion towards the silver-white stomach, where they lost themselves imperceptibly: but what served more than all to dazzle the eye with the brilliance of variegated colouring, were innumerable spots of a rich and vivid reddish-purple, sprinkled without order over the whole surface of the upper skin; for with the animal's slightest movement all these points, and spots, and contrasts of variegated hues, melted together in the sun beams, and formed one universal blaze composed of all the colours of the rainbow.

Much as I admired the splendour of its garment, not less did I wonder at the enormous thickness of this terrific creature, which did not yield in bulk to that of a

man of moderate size. Yet by comparing its thickness with its length, Zadi was decidedly of opinion, that the anaconda must have been greatly reduced by a fast of unusually long duration. But the tranquillity of our observations was suddenly disturbed by perceiving, that she desisted abruptly from her airy gambols, and remained motionless at the foot of the palm-tree with her head elevated and turned towards the pavilion, as if in the act of listening!

At that moment, oh! God! with what violence did my heart beat against my bosom! If (as from every circumstance appeared but too probable) my friend was really shut up within the pavilion, it was beyond a doubt, that the monster had discovered his being so near her, and was now on the point of making a serious attack! We could see distinctly the shape of her hideous head and the flames of her great piercing eye-balls, reflected from the glass windows, whose shutters had been closed from within. But the sight of her own terrors seemed to scare even the snake herself, for she instantly recoiled; and then laying herself down close to the threshold of the circular pavilion, she encompassed it entirely, as if she was determined to secure her destined victim irrevocably, by enclosing him within the impassable limits of her magic ring.

Deeply penetrated with the sense of that danger by which my friend was menaced, I forgot my own, and seizing my gun placed it to my shoulder; the ball whistled through the air: I was an excellent marksman, and was certain that I had pointed my piece exactly at the monster's head: and yet, whether too great anxiety made my hand shake, or that the animal at that very moment made some slight change in her attitude, I know not, but it is at least certain, that not the slightest shrinking gave me reason to believe, that she felt herself at all injured. In the meanwhile, Zadi had seized my arm, and drawn me forcibly into a deeper part of the thicket.

"Ah! Mr. Everard!" sighed he; "I was well aware,

that the anaconda can set all our fire-arms at defiance. Her scaly hide renders her invulnerable, except when one is quite close to her; and all that you have done is to put your own safety in danger, without advancing a single step nearer to my master's relief."

However, it did not appear, that our enemy had paid much attention to my assault upon her. On the contrary, she only busied herself in renewing her attempts to gain an entrance through the pavilion's windows: till at length, seemingly wearied with her unavailing efforts, she retired slowly, and concealed herself under the verdant umbrella of the palm-trees. We also had regained our former lurking place; though we were now more irresolute than ever, as to the means most proper to be adopted towards the rescue of my friend.

While we stood thus with our eyes fixed immoveably upon the pavilion, we observed the door to be slightly agitated. After a minute, the lock was gently drawn back; slowly, and with the utmost caution, did the door expand about the breadth of half a foot, and out sprang the little Psyche, a beautiful Italian grey-hound, Seafield's favourite play-fellow and inseparable companion. As if conscious of her danger, she rushed down the hill with her utmost swiftness; but with still greater swiftness did the anaconda in one monstrous spring dart rattling down from its airy covert. The poor little animal was seized: we could just hear a short half-suppressed cry, which marked its dying agony; for the dreadful jaw-bone moved but twice, or thrice, and lo! the dog's chine was broken, and every bone in its body splintered. The snake then dragged her prey to the foot of the palm-tree, (for in order to produce the proper exertion of strength, it seemed necessary for her to have the stem or strong branch of some tree to cling to,) where she stretched herself out upon the grass at her ease, and began with her black tongue to separate the flesh from the bones of the crushed little animal.

The distress, occasioned in my mind by this sight, in itself so painful and disgusting, was converted into agony by the reflections to which it gave birth, after the first moments of horror and surprise were passed! That fact was now confirmed, which till this moment (in order to preserve at least a gleam of comfort however faint) I had obstinately refused to believe. Seafield then was actually in the pavilion! the discharge of my musket had in all probability made him aware, that his friends were at no great distance. No one but he could have unclosed the door so cautiously, in order to leave his little favourite at liberty to quit their common shelter; and Zadi was positive, that he had observed a riband fastened round the neck of the animal, to which something white appeared to be attached, in form resembling a letter. It was then a message to *us!* a cry for assistance! a sacred injunction, that we should not abandon him in this season of his utmost need! What agony of soul must he have endured. What agony of soul must he even at that moment be enduring! To what a pitch of desperation must his mind have been worked up, before his trembling hand could have resolved to draw back the bolt, which was the only barrier between himself and annihilation! How bitter a pang must it have given his tender benevolent heart, when he drove out his fond and faithful companion, and exposed her to such danger! and then flattering himself (as no doubt he did) that the little animal's speed would surely enable her to escape. Oh! what a cruel wound must Psyche's expiring half-heard cry have given to his feelings! These reflections, or at least others nearly similar to them, almost deprived poor Zadi of his senses altogether.

"Oh! powers of mercy!" he exclaimed repeatedly; "what did his letter mean to tell us? that at this moment he is struggling with despair? Alas! alas! we know it, we feel it! and yet here we stand inactive, without counsel, without resolution, without hope!"

"Patience! patience!" said I, interrupting him: "it is evident, that our waiting here is of no advantage. Let us return home, and endeavour to find means of giving some more effectual assistance than our tears."

We found the domestics returned from their unavailing expedition, and the greatest part of them assembled in the court-yard, whose lofty walls afforded them a secure refuge: being all natives of Ceylon, they were well acquainted with the nature and pursuits of the anaconda, either from their own experience, or from hearsay: but, almost deprived of the power of thought by their terrors, no one was able to point out any means for attacking her with success. I immediately despatched two of them to Columbo, to explain our situation, and demand assistance. I also desired, that medical aid might be sent to Louisa, and that if they could possibly find one, they should bring back with them a speaking trumpet. I then repaired to poor Louisa, and endeavoured to comfort her heart with a faint gleam of hope, which my own was incapable of admitting. I failed in the attempt; she was a prey to the most abject despair: nor was I more successful in my endeavours to persuade her to withdraw from this scene of horror, and accompany my messengers to Columbo; a measure which was advisable both on account of her own security, and because her absence would leave us at liberty to bestow our undivided attention upon her husband. But finding her resolved not to remove from the scene of Seafield's danger, I returned to the court-yard, where the dejected domestics were still lamenting over the situation of their master, and expatiating on the dreadful properties of the anaconda.

"Friends!" I exclaimed, "there is not one among us all to whom the master of this house has not been a benefactor! Now that he is threatened with destruction, now is the time for us to show our gratitude for his kindness! Come then; let every one follow me, who loves his lord, and who bears an honest heart in his bosom.

Let us despise the danger of the attack and set forward in a full body to deliver him by force! We are armed; in numbers, in reflection, in skill, the advantage is on our side. The bolder that we rush upon our enemy, the less dreadful will she appear to us. My life for it, she will be alarmed at the attack, will fly before us, and thus we shall enjoy the inestimable pleasure of rescuing our friend from death. Now then! let all who are of my opinion show themselves to be men, and range themselves on this side of the court."

Alas! Zadi was the only one who obeyed this invitation: the rest, poor timid wretches (in number between twenty and thirty), stood there trembling, gazing upon each other with doubtful looks, and whispering together, as if desirous of discovering an excuse for the cowardice of each in the ignominy of his neighbour. After a few minutes, one of them, whom the rest had appointed to be spokesman, advanced towards me, and stammered out their general assurance: "that to attack the famished snake with force would be nothing better than absolute madness."

This hope disappointed, I next resolved to try, what effect of terror might be produced upon the monster by the united shouts and outcries of so considerable a body, assisted by the general and repeated discharge of our fire-arms. Our preparations were soon made; Louisa was apprised of the clamour which was going to be made: and, in truth, we raised an uproar so loud and so well sustained, that it seemed almost capable of waking the sleepers in the grave. From all the casements we discharged at the same moment our muskets provided with a double charge, and a hail of bullets rattled about the head of the gigantic snake, who afforded us a fair aim. Yet still she continued to play her gambols quietly among the trees; nay, she did not give any sign by which we could judge, that she was sensible of our attack. After a few moments spent in this manner with no better effect,

we found that our provision of ammunition was exhausted: besides, we were ourselves too much fatigued to continue any longer an attempt, which afforded us so little prospect of producing any advantage.

By this time the day was drawing rapidly to its close. By dint of turning the painful subject frequently in my mind, and making every possible conjecture, one means of scaring the anaconda had suggested itself, which appeared to me well worthy of attention; but in order to put it in execution the darkness of the night was necessary. I had often read in books of travels, what powerful aid had been derived from fire against the attacks of wild beasts, and how lions and tigers had often forgotten their thirst of blood, and betaken themselves to flight, like the most timid animals, when scared by a fire-brand whirled round, or the blaze of a flaming heap of straw. Armed with such weapons, I was determined, as soon as night should be set in, to approach the anaconda, and put her courage to the proof, even though the faithful Zadi should be the only one of sufficient courage to assist me in my venturous design.

The night arrived: an awful stillness reigned all around us; our enemy, however, still was watchful; for from time to time we could hear her rustling among the branches. I passed the twilight in endeavouring to comfort Louisa with the prospect of a serious attack to be made upon the snake the next day, from which (as I assured her) much better success might be expected; but I judged it prudent to conceal from her our nightly enterprise, the effect of which appeared even to myself too uncertain to make me venture to ground upon it any promise of advantage. Besides, her exhausted strength made it absolutely necessary, that she should pass some moments in tranquillity; a state, which seemed to me absolutely incompatible with the tumults of expectation, which the knowledge of our proposed adventure would naturally excite in her bosom.

At length a sign given by Zadi made me aware, that all our preparations were completed. Louisa was reclining on a couch with her eyes closed, and seemed to have fallen into a kind of lethargy. I stole softly from the apartment, and was on the point of quitting the house, when a means suggested itself to me of communicating my design to my friend, even before the arrival of the speaking trumpet, which I expected the next day from Columbo. I recollected, that I had lately taught Seafield a common European trick of combination, by which two persons separated from each other (having first agreed upon their measures) could convey their sentiments without the help of words: a certain number of blows, corresponding with the number of the place which each letter of the four and twenty holds in the alphabet, enabled the striker to form words and sentences, by which the hearer without other communication was made aware of the steps, which without his knowledge it had been settled for him to take. This trifle had but lately served us to puzzle Louisa, and pass away an idle evening hour; and I flattered myself with the possibility, that it might still exist in Seafield's remembrance. At any rate, I resolved to make the trial without loss of time, and the stillness of the night seemed to afford me the most favourable opportunity for executing my plan with success.

A thin smooth board, well calculated for reverberating sounds, and a strong hammer were easily procured. With these I hastened to the balcony, and began by striking as many blows as the alphabet required, (that is, one to A, two to B, twenty-four to Z, &c.) till I had gone through it regularly. I trusted that this orderly manner of proceeding would awaken his attention; and having completed the alphabet, I told him (in the same manner) if he comprehended my meaning, to strike three blows within the pavilion, as loud as he possibly could. Oh! heavenly powers! I had not long to wait! it was not long before three faint sounds informed me, that I was

understood, and never did music seem so sweet to my ear! I hurried to tell Louisa, that I had found a means of communicating with her husband, and that I was going to command him to be of good cheer in her name and for her sake. A silent melancholy smile, a convulsive pressure of my hand, were my reward; and I now hastened again to the balcony to assure the poor prisoner, that I was labouring for his relief; that Louisa was well, and begged him to be patient and composed; and that I requested him to keep up his spirits, and resist the attacks of despair, since he might depend upon it, that I would rescue him, or perish in the attempt. I concluded by desiring him to assure me, that he would confide in the activity of my friendship, by repeating his former signal: I now suffered my hammer to rest—I listened—again, more audibly than before, did I hear the three wished-for blows given from within the pavilion, and I now hastened to prosecute my nightly plan with fresh spirits and renovated ardour.

Excited by Zadi's remonstrances, about a dozen of the bravest among the domestics and palanquin-bearers were assembled with torches in their hands in the court-yard. My design was, to steal as near the hill as the underwood would permit, under favour of the darkness, and only guided by a single dark lanthorn. When we could approach no further without hazard, we were to light our torches as fast as possible, and whirling them round and round, to rush towards the pavilion with loud shouts, in order that our attack might be accompanied by all the terrors and advantage of surprise.

Zadi, to whose care the guiding lanthorn was confided, went foremost; I followed close upon his footsteps, and thus with extreme caution and in profound silence did we press through bushes and brambles, till we arrived above half as near again to the pavilion, as the position which we had occupied during the day. The anaconda now lay right before us, quiet and unsuspecting; nor

could we have wished for a better opportunity for executing our plan with every probability of success. We now turned to our companions.—But, just Heaven! who can express our astonishment and vexation, and how did our heart sicken at perceiving, that the faithless cowards had shrunk from the danger now that it was so near at hand, and had profited by the darkness to steal away one by one! I was alone with Zadi: we concluded with justice, that for only two persons to make the attempt must be unavailing, and the old man flattered himself, that he should be able to shame his comrades into a resumption of their more manly resolutions. I had but little hopes of his success; yet no choice was left me but to follow him and endeavour to give double strength to his persuasions and reproaches.

Both were employed in vain: their terrors had subdued all sense of shame completely. They called us madmen for wishing to expose ourselves to the fury of the famished anaconda; and, instead of promising any future assistance, they declared, that they would only wait for day-break to secure themselves by flight from a danger so imminent. In the meanwhile Zadi was busy in fastening several torches together in pairs.

"Come, sir!" he cried to me: "let us lose no more precious time in endeavouring to inspire these heartless knaves with courage! Let us leave the cowards, and try whether perhaps the glare of these torches, doubled as you see them, may not of themselves be sufficient to dazzle and scare away the monster. At the worst we can but perish with our dear master, and it is better to die than not perform our duty!"

I obeyed him: we hastened back to the pavilion. Already were we on the point of ascending the hill, when I felt my arm seized by some one with a convulsive grasp. I turned hastily round: a thin figure, breathless through speed and anxiety, and whose white garments fluttered in the breeze of night, stood beside me.

It was Louisa! Our dispute with the slaves had not passed so quietly, but that our voices had reached the ear of Seafield's sorrowing wife, whose couch anguish of heart permitted not slumber to approach. She questioned her attendants; by artful interrogatories she contrived to draw from them the peculiar nature of the enterprise on which we were engaged. She feigned to sleep: and, as soon as her women were thrown off their guard, she stole from her apartment, seized a torch, and followed us, determined to share with us the danger and its reward.

My whole resolution failed me, when I recognised the new comer, and when she made known in a few short expressive words her desperate resolution. In a low voice I conjured her to return to the mansion-house; I protested, that her presence robbed our arms of strength and our hearts of courage; and I asked her, whether it was not enough agony for us to tremble for an existence so dear as Seafield's, without being obliged to risk the loss of another life equally precious?

"My life for his!" was the only reply which she gave to my remonstrances; "my life for his!—What! shall I rest my hands idly before me, while strangers are active in his defence? Shall I have to blame myself during the remnant of my existence for having done nothing for him in the time of his extreme need—*Nothing?* Shall my husband actually be rescued by his friends, while his careless wife has not even *attempted* to preserve him?—No, Everard, no! my life for his! my life for his!"

I listened with admiration to the overflowings of this noble heart! How to resist her vehemence I knew not! I was compelled to give way to her, and yet was conscious that her presence must entirely destroy every chance of our success. It would have been madness to venture in her company to that extreme point of danger, to which Zadi and myself had before not scrupled to

advance. The anaconda too appeared at this moment to be more restless than formerly: doubtless the sound of our footsteps, and our whispering dispute, must already have betrayed our being in her neighbourhood. Nevertheless, we hastily kindled our fire-brands, one of which we held in each hand, and as we whirled them rapidly backwards and forwards we sent forth shouts and shrieks with all our strength; the dead stillness of all around us rendered our outcries doubly dreadful.

A rushing sound among the tops of the palm-trees, as if branch by branch they were forcibly snapped asunder, was the answer given to our challenge. It was the anaconda, (whether excited by fear or by anger, I will not pretend to decide,) who darted herself from tree to tree with tremendous leaps, while the slender stems were bent and shaken by her burthen. At the same time we were alarmed by a loud hissing, so piercingly sharp, that it seemed close at our ears, and her eyes, blazing with their own vindictive fires, shot lightnings through the gloom of night.

In truth, this appearance was in every respect so dreadful, that it required no ordinary courage to witness it without agitation. I cannot deny, that while gazing on it I felt my hair stand an end and my blood run cold; and I observed that Zadi strove to keep his teeth closed together, in order to prevent me from hearing them chatter. I turned with apprehension to Louisa. Alas! there lay the wretched wife on the earth deprived of consciousness. This sight was sufficient to banish every other consideration. I threw away my torches hastily, clasped the unfortunate in my arms, and with Zadi's help bore her with all speed back to the mansion-house; prosperous in this alone, we then retired unpursued by the anaconda. Here, after a long interval of insensibility, we at length succeeded in recalling Louisa's flying spirits. She revived; but it was only to dwell upon the midnight scene, from which we were just returned, and which her

inflamed imagination painted in colours, if possible, still more dreadful than the reality. She called without ceasing upon her husband and upon me: and since it was out of my power to give more active assistance elsewhere, it would have been barbarous in me to leave her, without endeavouring by soothing and persuasion to dissipate the gloomy ideas by which her heated brain was distracted.

Thus passed away the remainder of the night, which left us even with less hope and resolution than we possessed when it arrived. The melancholy morning at length dawned; but the sun was scarcely risen when Zadi rushed into the apartment. His eyes sparkled, and the beating of his heart almost choked his words before he was able to give them utterance.

"Oh! Mr. Everard!" he exclaimed, "my master—my dear master! He has still hope! He has still courage! He endeavours to communicate with us! We shall soon know how matters go with him—what he wishes to be done—what he expects us to do. Yes! yes! we *will* soon know it!"

It was some time before he was sufficiently calm to explain to me the cause of this emotion. At length I learned, that in examining the pavilion he had just discovered a sheet of paper thrust through the crevice of the door, and which, apparently detained by one of its corners, fluttered loosely in the air, unable to effect its escape. Doubtless it was a letter, which Seafield hoped some favourable gust of wind would carry within our reach, but which he had not sufficiently disengaged from its narrow passage. As to reading the contents, even if the distance had permitted it, Zadi was not possessed of the knowledge requisite. He therefore had hastened in all diligence to communicate to me this discovery, from which I also derived some hope, though fainter than that which filled the bosom of the faithful Zadi.

We hurried to the hill, approached still nearer than

we had ventured to do hitherto, and, with the assistance of an excellent telescope, I endeavoured to decipher the characters traced upon the important paper. Alas! that there actually *were* characters traced on it, was all that I could distinguish; for the light paper fluttered continually in the wind, and was never suffered to rest for two seconds together. My inexhaustible patience, my unwearied exertions, long struggled against the evident impossibility of success: I gained nothing by them except the conviction, that to prosecute the attempt further would only be to throw away a greater portion of my time. Zadi, in breathless silence, and his eyes fixed on my face unalterably, watched my every movement.

"Then you give up the point?" said he at length, while a livid paleness overspread his dark countenance, and such a trembling seized him, that I could see his every limb shaking; "well, then, there is no more to be said! Let us return to the house, and take courage: I will fetch you the paper."

"Old man!" I exclaimed, starting at this unexpected assurance, "what say you? Your good intention is worthy of your good heart; but you would make an unavailing sacrifice to your fidelity; you may bring destruction on yourself, but you never will bring the paper from thence. To do that is out of any mortal power!"

"May be so! may be so!" repeated the Indian; "but at least the trial shall be made. It seems, as if my master's voice cried to me, that his safety depended on that paper; and should I be worthy to belong to him, if I were deaf to my master's cry? By the God of my fathers, I will either come back to you with that paper, or never will come back again."

And with every word that he spoke, his tone became stronger, his step firmer, and the fire of resolution illuminated his large dark eyes.

During this contention we reached the court-yard; in

silence, and absorbed in himself, did this unequalled servant make the necessary preparations for his undertaking. His plan was to conceal his whole person, from head to foot, under a covering of boughs and cocoa-leaves, resembling as much as possible the broken branches with which the snake's gambols or indignation had strewed the hill all around her. Under this verdant shield, he flattered himself that he should be able to creep gradually to the pavilion door, unperceived by the anaconda.

"I have been accustomed," said he, "to this kind of work from my earliest infancy. In my time I was reckoned an expert elephant-hunter, and by means of this artifice have frequently made those enormous animals my prize."

But a few minutes were past, and already was Zadi accoutred in this singular disguise. He provided himself with no weapons except his dagger. He obstinately refused to suffer me to accompany him, assuring me that I should only put my own life in danger, without being able to afford him the least assistance. He was so positive, that I was obliged to give up the point: but I was at least determined to accompany the noble-minded fellow with my eyes, as well as with my fervent prayers and wishes. From the balcony of the mansion-house I had an extensive and unimpeded view over the surrounding objects; and from hence I saw Zadi set forward on his perilous adventure, taking through precaution a wide circuit, in order to reach the hill itself.

With equal prudence he made his approach on that side, where the pavilion would screen him from the enemy's observation. From time to time I lost sight of him among the underwood; even when he was before my eyes I occasionally doubted whether it was he indeed, so cautiously and so artfully did he make his approach, creeping on his hands and knees, sometimes remaining without stirring, sometimes stealing forwards with a movement so imperceptible, that it almost eluded the

keenness of sight. He was a living example to me of the discretion, assiduity, and skill, which the savage employs in laying his ambuscades, and stealing upon his unsuspecting enemy.

And now favoured by the long grass and fragments of boughs, with which the ground was covered, had Zadi by a thousand serpentine movements reached the wall of the pavilion. My heart beat violently, as I saw on one side the anaconda, as yet, it is true, suspecting nothing, but still dreadful from her appearance, and exhibiting every moment awful proofs of her strength, by the powerful leaps with which she darted herself from bough to bough; and, on the other hand, separated from her by the distance of ten yards at most, I beheld a poor, infirm, and aged man, whose force consisted only in his courage and his discretion.

Zadi in the mean while remained so tranquil and so motionless in his present position near the pavilion-door, that the monster could not fail of being deceived by so unsuspicious an appearance. The Indian's eye was fixed immoveably upon the snake, and followed all her twistings and windings with incessant application, while she swung herself with unwearied activity backwards and forwards, now here, now there, now above, now below; till, at the very moment when she shot herself over him in a bound of prodigious extent, I suddenly saw the invaluable paper disappear from its place, without being able to perceive the means by which it was brought into the power of the successful lurker.

I clasped my hands in ecstasy, and poured out my thanks to God from the very bottom of my heart. But all was not yet done. It required no less caution and dexterity to retire than to approach; and never did I offer up more fervent vows than at the moment when the animated thicket began to set itself in motion. Slower than the hour-hand of a dial, now moving forwards, now backwards, now right, now left, it stole itself down the

hill. Still it went on, and on, and lower, and lower, till, with inexpressible delight, I saw it almost at the very foot of the hill; and now at length I began to draw my breath without pain. "The noble fellow is safe," said I to myself. At that moment, whether joy at the successful issue of his attempt had deprived him of part of his former caution, or whether some accidental derangement of the sheltering branches discovered enough to excite the reptile's suspicion, at that moment I saw the anaconda dart from above, and in the quickness of thought she reached the bottom of the hill, and enveloped the unfortunate in her folds! A piercing shriek of horror burst from me! I felt all my blood congeal itself within my veins!

Yet even in this dreadful situation wonderful was the presence of mind which Zadi still preserved; wonderful was the courage, the activity, and the skill, with which he defended himself against the monster. Grasping his dagger with firm and steady hand, he struck it with repeated blows between the impenetrable scales of his enemy, sought out with inconceivable address the most tender parts to strike, and at length succeeded in giving her so deep and so well-placed a wound, that it must needs have worked her up to the most extreme pitch of pain and fury; for suddenly I beheld him only girdled by a single fold of the anaconda's tail, with which (in the same manner that one who has unexpectedly grasped a nettle, throws it away) she hurled the poor wretch into the air far away, till I lost him among the surrounding bushes. As for the snake, she hastily regained her former hiding-place, where she lay quiet and concealed for some time before she resumed her usual sports; though when she did resume them, it was evidently with less sprightliness than before.

My agony is not to be described! Nothing was to be seen of the unfortunate Indian. What was become of him? Had he been killed by the violence of the fall?

or was he at that moment struggling in the pangs of death? His preservation I considered as beyond the limits of possibility; and yet it seemed to me inhuman and ungrateful quite to abandon him to his fate, without having first exhausted every possible means of assisting him. Irresistibly carried away by these sentiments, I rushed from the balcony, and hastened towards the hill by the same course which he had pursued himself, and which I could easily track by the depression of the dewy grass. Towards that side, also, had he been thrown by the anaconda, and it was probable that the thicket might shelter me, till I could reach the spot where he lay dying. In the eagerness of this hope, I totally overlooked the extreme risk of an undertaking, the very idea of which but four-and-twenty hours sooner would have made me shudder through every limb. So true is it, that violent emotions communicate a force to the mind, which enables it to rise above itself, and gives it courage to encounter danger and even death without the shrinking of a single nerve.

Suddenly my attention was arrested by a faint murmur! It came from a thicket at no great distance: I listened again! Oh heavens! it was the voice of Zadi. I lost not a moment in hastening to the place; he heard me; he opened his eye-lids, which seemed already closed in eternal sleep, recognized me as I raised him in my arms, and a faint smile stole over his countenance, as he stretched out his hand to me with difficulty.

"Take it," he said; "God be thanked, that I am able to reward your kindness so well;—even in the monster's grasp, I still kept fast hold of it: Oh, take it, take it!"

It was the paper which he had purchased so dearly, and which the faithful creature extended towards me.

"Read it!" he continued; "lose no time! before I am deprived of my senses again—and for ever—at least let me have the satisfaction to know—what my master wished me to do!—alas! alas! now you will be left alone to assist him!"

"And assist him I will, doubt it not, thou noble heart," I replied, while I strove to raise him from the ground; "but my first assistance must be given to yourself."

It was in vain that he conjured me to leave him to his fate, and only think of effecting his master's rescue. Without heeding him I managed to lift him upon my shoulders, and tottering beneath his weight I endeavoured to effect our escape from the dangerous vicinity of the pavilion. With difficulty I succeeded in regaining the open ground. Fortunately some of the other domestics saw us from the house, and hastened to relieve me from my wretched burthen. Assisted by them, I at length saw Zadi safely deposited on a sofa in the mansion-house; he was again on the point of losing all sensibility; but, a cordial of powerful virtue being administered without delay, his strength was restored sufficiently to preserve him from a relapse.

It's true, none of his limbs were fractured, but he was dreadfully bruised by his fall; his breast and ribs had been almost crushed together by the close-drawn folds of the serpent; he was totally unable to move so much as a finger, and his condition was such as would have excited pity even in the most insensible nature. As for me, I almost sunk beneath this addition to that general calamity, which seemed to increase with every succeeding moment. I was now a single man, to whose hand Providence had committed the lives of three afflicted creatures! never did mortal pray to Heaven with more fervour or more unaffected zeal, than I did while imploring the Divine grace to assist me in fulfilling a mission so sacred and so difficult.

But as for Zadi, he seemed to have already forgotten himself, his past dangers, and present pains. He implored me to waste no more time in striving to mitigate his sufferings, and assured me, that the letter of his dear afflicted master would be the best balsam for all his

wounds. In compliance with his earnest entreaties, I prepared to peruse the paper: but the tears gushed into my eyes on recognizing the well-known hand-writing, and it was with difficulty that I deciphered the following words:—

"Oh! I understand you well, my friends, my beloved-ones! your voices, still more your unremitting and desperate exertions to relieve me—all convince me, that you are near me; that you feel for me; that you spare no labour to effect my rescue! Alas! you will labour in vain! Death has already enveloped me in his dark circle; there is no escape; I have already bidden farewell to life; I cannot long survive in this atmosphere, corrupted as it is by the pestilential vapours, constantly exhaling from the monster's jaws. I die resigned; but do not embitter this last and heavy hour by the apprehension, lest your exertions in my behalf should be the means of involving you in my danger. By all that is sacred and dear, I conjure you, abandon me to my unhappy fate; fly! oh! fly far from hence: it is my last, my only, my most earnest request!

"Everard! Oh! Everard, my poor wife! Do not abandon my Louisa!"

A cold shuddering ran through my bones: the poisonous air robbed us even of our last wretched hope, that the anaconda might at length retire wearied out with her vain expectations, and leave my friend at liberty to quit his retreat. But now it was evident from his letter that, long ere this could happen, Seafield would be no more! immediate help must save him, or none! Zadi sobbed aloud: it was an addition to my own grief to think, that I had been obliged to give a fresh pang to his faithful bosom, and it wrung me to the very soul, when I saw him give way openly to this burst of sorrow. Suddenly he uttered a shriek so loud, that it startled all who heard him.

"No! no!" he exclaimed in the most violent agita-

"Be of good comfort, friend!" said I, as I turned to leave him; "the man whom you sought is found! I will tread that path which no other will tread, and I now leave you for the purpose of seeking it."

Zadi's eyes were now filled with tears of joy.

"May the God of my fathers bless you!" he said, raising his eyes to heaven; "now then I can die contented; now then the hour of my master's deliverance will strike at last."

I lost no time in hastening to Van Derkel's. I offered his herdsman the whole sum in my possession, if he would assist me in driving the beasts under the palm-trees: but he shuddered at the proposal, and rejected my proffered gold. I was not yet discouraged. By his master's authority I promised him freedom, provided he would but venture so far as to advance with the herd to the extremity of the little grove, which on the north-side separated the hill from the open country. He hesitated; again I pressed him; and at length he stammered out his consent, but in a voice so faint, and with a look of such irresolution, as convinced me, that I could place little dependence upon his promised help.

However, I at least neglected none of the means, which might contribute to our mutual safety: I caused the slaves to prepare with all diligence a couple of machines similar to those under which Zadi had performed his hazardous undertaking. Covered with these, we began to drive the cattle slowly before us; and as the general agitation had caused them to be totally neglected by their keepers, during their confinement in a place which afforded no herbage for their nourishment, hunger made them more obedient than we should probably have otherwise found them; and thus did we advance towards the hill, though the little resolution of my companion evidently grew still less with every step which we took forwards. To encourage him, I bade him observe the tranquillity of the anaconda, who had gradually withdrawn herself into

her green shelter, so that we might almost have doubted her being really there.

"That is the very thing which alarms me!" answered the trembling slave; "I am sure that she has already discovered us, and now lurks concealed among the leaves, in order that she may make her prey more secure. Now then, not one step further will I advance; what I have already ventured is enough to merit liberty; but at all events I had rather pass the rest of my days in fetters, than purchase my freedom by advancing a single foot beyond this spot!"

And with these words he hurried away. However, I was the less disturbed at his forsaking me, when I perceived, that without him I could manage to drive the cattle forwards, and that no natural instinct made them aware of the neighbourhood of their enemy. It was not long before we arrived at the hill-foot. I was now obliged to leave the animals to their own guidance, feeling themselves no longer annoyed by my goad they gave way to the impulse of hunger, and dispersing themselves carelessly began to feed upon the welcome herbage; but how great was my joy at perceiving the bull separate himself from the rest of the herd and begin to ascend the hill. We arrived near the group of palm-trees; every thing was hushed and tranquil; not a sound was to be heard except the noise of the scattered branches, as the bull trampled them beneath his feet: the anaconda seemed to have disappeared altogether.

But on a sudden a loud and rattling rush was heard among the palms, and with a single spring the snake darted down like a thunder-clap and twisted herself with her whole body round her devoted victim. Before the animal was yet aware of his danger, he already felt his dewlap inclosed between the wide-expanded jaws of the monster, and her teeth struck into it deeply. Roaring aloud he endeavoured to fly, and succeeded in dragging his tormentor a few yards away with him; but instantly

she coiled herself round him in three or four wide folds, and drew these knots so close together, that the entangled beast was incapable of moving, and remained as if rooted to the place, already struggling with the terrors and pangs of death. The first noise of this extraordinary contest had been sufficient to put the remaining cattle to flight.

Unequal as was the strife, still it was not over instantly. The noble beast wanted not spirit to defend himself, nor was his strength easily exhausted. Now he rolled himself on the ground, and endeavoured to crush the enemy with his weight; now he swelled every nerve and exerted the power of every muscle, to burst the fetters in which his limbs were enveloped; he shook himself violently; he stamped, he bit, he roared, he pawed up the earth, he foamed at the mouth, and then dashed himself on the ground again with convulsive struggles. But with every moment the anaconda's teeth imprinted on his flesh new wounds; with every moment she drew her folds tighter and tighter; till, after struggling for a full quarter of an hour, I at length saw the poor animal stretched out at full length and breathless, totally deprived of motion and of life.

Now then I expected to see the anaconda gratify the hunger by which she had so long been tormented: but I was ignorant, that it is not the custom of this animal to divide its prey, but to swallow it at one enormous morsel. The size of the murdered bull made this impossible without much preparation; and I now learned, from the snake's proceedings, the necessity which there was for her always remaining in the neighbourhood of some large tree.

She again seized the bull with her teeth, and dragged it to the foot of the stoutest palm. Here she endeavoured to place it upright, leaning against the trunk. Having effected this, she enveloped the tree and the carcase together in one great fold, and continued to draw this closer, till she had broken every individual bone in her victim's body into a thousand pieces, and had actually reduced it

into a shapeless mass of flesh. She was still occupied in this manner, when I hastened back to the mansion-house to rejoice Louisa and Zadi with the assurance of my success.

The roaring of the bull had already prepared the latter for my tidings. He limped to meet me at the door in spite of his bodily agonies, and overpowered me with thanks and benedictions. He also informed me, that the expected succours from Columbo were at length arrived, and that a physician had accompanied them. I immediately requested to see the latter, and commissioned him to impart the good news of Seafield's approaching deliverance to Louisa, with such precautions as might prevent her enfeebled constitution from suffering through excess of joy. I also recommended Zadi to his care, and then hastened back to complete my work; Zadi having assured me, that it was absolutely necessary to watch for the moment, when the anaconda should have swallowed her prey, and be enervated and overcome by the torpor of indigestion.

"You will be in no want of assistants," he added; "my fellow-servants are all ready to accompany you, not only because I have succeeded in convincing them that all danger is now at an end, but because among the natives of Ceylon the flesh of the anaconda is looked upon as most delicious food."

In fact, on entering the court-yard I found the whole body of domestics, women and children as well as men, prepared for the attack with clubs, hatchets, and every sort of weapon, which had offered itself to their hands. The party from Columbo were well provided with ammunition; and we now all set joyfully forwards for the hill, though, on approaching it, we judged it as well still to use some little precaution.

I advanced beyond the rest. The anaconda had by this time entirely covered the carcase with her slime, and was in the very act of gorging this monstrous morsel.

This task was not accomplished without violent efforts: a full hour elapsed before she had quite finished her dreadful meal; at length the carcase was entirely swallowed, and she stretched herself out at full length in the grass, with her stomach distended to the most astonishing dimensions. Every trace of her former liveliness and activity had disappeared! Her immoderate appetite had now yielded her up, impotent and defenceless, a prey even to the least formidable foe.

I hasten to conclude this long and painful tragedy. I discharged my musket at the monster at a moderate distance. This time the ball struck her close by her eye. She felt herself wounded: her body swelled with spite and venom, and every stripe of her variegated skin shone with more brilliant and vivid colours. But as to revenging herself upon her assailant, of that she was now totally incapable. She made one vain attempt to regain her old retreat among the boughs of the palm-trees, but sank down again upon the grass motionless and helpless. The report of my musket was the signal agreed upon to give notice to the expectant crowd, that they might approach without danger. Every one now rushed towards the snake with loud shouting and clamours of joy. We all at once attacked her, and she soon expired under a thousand blows; but I did not wait to witness this catastrophe. A dearer interest occupied my mind: I hastened with all speed to the pavilion, and knocked loudly at the door, which was fastened within.

"Seafield! my friend!" I exclaimed; "'tis I! 'tis Everard! Open! open! I bring you life and liberty."

A minute passed—another—and still I listened in vain for an answer. Had fatigue overpowered him? Was he asleep, that he answered not? I knocked again; I spoke a second time, and louder; I listened so attentively that I could have distinguished the humming of a gnat within the pavilion. Heaven and earth! was it possible that after all I had come too late? The thought was

distraction! I snatched an axe from one of the slaves, and after a few blows the pavilion door flew open.

I rushed into the room, and looked eagerly round for my friend—I found him! Oh! Heaven! his eyes were closed, his cheeks pale; every feature in his noble countenance so changed, that he was scarcely to be recognized! He lay extended in his arm-chair, and the noise of our entrance seemed to rouse him from a long stupor. He saw me; a faint smile played round his wan lips, while he attempted to stretch out his hand to me, but it sank down again from weakness: I threw my arms round him and pressed him to my heart in an agony of joy.

"You are safe!" I endeavoured to say; but the attempt to repress my gushing tears choked my voice, and the sounds were unintelligible.

"Yes!" said he with difficulty, "this is being a friend indeed! But tell me! Louisa——?"

"She lives, and expects you," I replied; "come, come! my friend; rouse yourself! Make an effort, and shake off this lethargy! Look upon your danger as no more than a frightful dream, and awake to the real happiness which awaits you!"

"It waits not for me!" he answered faintly: "I have received my death-warrant in this chamber. My minutes are counted! Louisa—Oh! bear me to Louisa!"

The chamber was hot and close even to suffocation. We removed him with all speed into the open air, four of the slaves bearing him as he sat in his arm chair; but as we conveyed him down the hill we took care to turn his face away from the spot where lay the breathless but still horrible anaconda. The purer atmosphere seemed immediately to produce a beneficial effect upon the sufferer; and his strength was still further recruited by a few drops of a cordial, with which I had taken care to provide myself, and which I administered with the utmost caution.

On our arrival at the mansion-house, we found that

Zadi's attention had already provided every thing which his master could possibly need. His bed was prepared; every kind of refreshment was in readiness, and the physician was waiting to afford his much-required assistance. But we soon found that the most effectual medicine for Seafield would be the sight of Louisa; and as the physician was of opinion, that the lady was more likely to suffer from anxiety to see her husband, than from the agitation of the interview, my friend was indulged in his wish, and we supported him to the chamber, where his wife so anxiously was expecting his approach.

I will not attempt to describe this interview, nor that which afterwards took place between Seafield and the faithful Zadi; the feeling heart of itself will fill up this chasm; yet I cannot omit mentioning, that it was not till I had explained to my friend the whole extent of his obligations to that faithful Indian, and till the repeated orders of his master compelled him to appear before him, that Zadi indulged his ardent wish to throw himself at the feet of his beloved lord. And why then did he deprive himself so long of a pleasure which he desired so earnestly? The noble fellow was unwilling to afflict his master by showing him how much and how severely he had suffered for his sake! I cannot tell you how much both the re-united couple and myself were affected by this uncommon mark of delicacy and consideration.

Oh! how happily and how swiftly fled away the first days which succeeded the deliverance of my friend: alas! those first days were the only ones destined to pass happily. It was soon but too evident, that Seafield's sufferings in that fatal pavilion had injured his constitution irreparably. With every succeeding day his strength visibly decreased, and the blighted flower bowed itself still nearer to the ground. His malady defied the power of medicine; he seemed to perish away before our eyes; and the physician was at length compelled to acknowledge that all the powers of art were insufficient to sustain

any longer Seafield's exhausted frame. Not the unsatisfied demands of nature; not the hunger which gnawed his entrails, nor the burning thirst which dried up his palate; not the agonies of his mind, and his painful wrestling against despair: none of these had affected him so fatally—No; it was the pestiferous breath exhaling from the jaws of the anaconda, which had penetrated into Seafield's close and sultry prison; and whose force, concentrated and increased by confinement, had fallen upon his constitution like a baleful mildew, and planted the seeds of dissolution in the very marrow of his life.

What Louisa and myself endured, while watching his slow but constantly progressive journey to the tomb, no words can utter. He gave Zadi and his three sons their freedom, and made over to him a small estate near Columbo, fully sufficient to secure the comfort of the good old man for the remainder of his existence. During the last days of his illness he frequently reminded me of the letter which he had written in the pavilion, and of which Zadi had obtained possession at such extreme risk; this paper he frequently charged me to consider as his dying testament; he as frequently repeated the same thing to his wife, while she wept by his bedside. His last words were like his letter, "Forsake not my poor Louisa!" His last action was to place her hand in mine—he sank back a corpse on his pillow, and Louisa fell lifeless at my feet.

Yet she saw him once more; she insisted on pressing her lips once again to his. I trembled for the convulsive agonies which her delicate frame would undergo during this last and most painful scene: yet was I still more alarmed, when I witnessed the composure of her affliction. She held his hand in hers; she spoke not one word; she heaved not one sigh; not a single tear escaped from her burning eyes. She stood long motionless by his bed-side; she bent down, and pressed her colourless lips upon his closed lids; and then slowly and silently she withdrew to her widowed chamber.

I chose for Seafield's sepulchre the place which he had always loved best, and where he had suffered the most; his tomb was raised in the fatal pavilion. Zadi and myself laid our friend in the earth; we should have thought his coffin profaned, had we suffered any other hands to touch it. Seafield and his sufferings slept in the grave; his less fortunate friends still lived to lament him.

My benefactor had left his property jointly to Louisa and myself; and his wishes respecting us had been expressed too clearly to be misunderstood. Louisa was among the loveliest of her sex; but I should have counted it profanation, had my heart suffered itself to harbour one thought of her less pure than is offered at the shrine of some enfranchised saint. I loved not Louisa; no, I adored her. Alas! it was not long before she became a saint indeed.

She complained not, but she sorrowed; she suffered, but it was in silence. In vain did she forbid her lips to confess the progress which grief made in her constitution: her emaciated form sufficiently betrayed it. A few melancholy weeks had elapsed since the death of my friend, when one morning her terrified women informed me, that she was not in her apartment, nor apparently had been in bed all night. My heart instructed me well where to seek the unfortunate. I flew to the pavilion; she was stretched on the marble stone, which covered her husband. In the agony of grief she had burst a blood-vessel, and her limbs were already cold; her countenance was calm, and a faint smile seemed to play round her lips: it was the only smile which I had seen there since Seafield's death. She was deposited in the same grave with her husband; for myself, I was unable to sustain the weight of grief imposed upon me by this second calamity, and a long and dangerous illness was the consequence of my mental sufferings.

The skill of my physician saved my life; and no

sooner was I able to quit the house, than I resolved to withdraw from a land rendered hateful to me by such bitter recollections. In consequence of Louisa's decease, the whole of Seafield's property by his will devolved to me—I endeavoured to prevail on Zadi to accept some part of it, but he declared that his master's liberality had gone beyond his utmost wishes.

"Yet one request," said he, "I will venture to make. My two eldest sons are grown up and able to take care of themselves; but the third is young, and I feel that my death can be at no great distance. His brothers may treat him ill, or at least may neglect him; but condescend to take him into your care, let him be your servant, and I shall not have a wish in this world left unaccomplished. Under the protection of an honest man, my boy cannot fail to become an honest man himself."

Mirza (for that was the lad's name, the same who is now with me) was in the room, and joined his entreaties to his father's with such earnestness, that I could not refuse their request. I soon after left Ceylon, followed by Zadi's blessings; the good old man is still alive, and by a third hand I hear from him frequently; but the letters which he dictates embrace but two topics, anxiety for the welfare of his son, and regret for the loss of his beloved master.

"You are now informed," continued Everard, after a moment's pause, addressing himself to the whole society, "you are now informed by what means I acquired my fortune. It was the gift of gratitude; but never can I recollect the dreadful service which I rendered Seafield (and, alas! which I rendered him in vain!) without feeling my frame convulsed with horror, and my mind tortured by the most painful recollections. It is this which has ever made me unwilling to discourse on the means by which I became possessed of my wealth. Yet I cannot but think it somewhat hard, that mere silence should be construed into positive guilt; and that

I should be treated as if convicted of the most atrocious crimes, because I have not thought it necessary to make public my private life, and to rend open anew the wounds of my heart for the gratification of idle and impertinent curiosity."

Everard was silent; so were all around him. Confusion blushed on every cheek, except on Jessy's, whose tender heart had been deeply affected by the mournful story, and whose mild blue eyes still floated in tears, though every now and then a smile beamed through them in approbation of her lover's conduct. Her father at length mustered up his courage, and broke through this embarrassing silence.

"My dear good Everard," said he, "I know not how to excuse my friends here for telling me so many slanders of you, nor myself for having been credulous enough to believe them. In truth, there is but one person in the room, whose lips are worthy to convey to you our apology: there then, let them make it,"—and with these words he placed the blushing Jessy in Everard's arms.

And Jessy's lips wisely expressed the apology in a kiss; and Everard acknowledged, while he pressed her to his bosom as his bride, that the apology was not only sufficient, but a reward in full for the sufferings which he had experienced through the vicissitudes of his whole past life!

AMORASSAN.

AMORASSAN;

OR, THE SPIRIT OF THE FROZEN OCEAN.

CHAPTER I.

"Still o'er these scenes my fancy wakes,
And fondly broods with miser-care;
Time but the impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear."—BURNS.

FROM the very depth of his soul did Muzaffer, the grand vizir, detest the poor wandering Hebrew, Ben Hafi. He knew well how to manage the strings of the caliph's heart, and resolved that not one should remain unsounded till the destruction of this hated stranger was accomplished. But here for the first time he found his arts baffled; a proof that rectitude of mind and innate goodness of heart are such celestial and enduring gifts, that, although they may be sometimes overpowered by guile and falsehood, they can never be entirely destroyed.

The caliph listened attentively, paused for some minutes, and then replied by the question—"What harm has Ben Hafi done? Whom has he injured?"

Muzaffer was of opinion "that Ben Hafi was universally considered as a dangerous person; that there was a mystery about the man, which at the best wore a very suspicious appearance; and that, although in truth he had as yet done no harm, perhaps he was only waiting for an opportunity to effect his evil designs with the more security."

Perhaps so—and perhaps not! Allah, who reads the hearts of Ben Hafi, of you, and of myself, alone knows what he *means* to do; we, Muzaffer, will content ourselves with knowing what he has already done. Since his arrival in my dominions no fault has been found in his conduct; if any could have been found, you, vizir, I am well assured, would not have failed to find it. The man is charitable, modest, wise; and does not my faithful dwarf Megnoun think well of him? Ah! he, of whom my good little deaf Megnoun thinks well, can never be a worthless man! for the spirit of truth resides in the heart of Megnoun, the arrows of discernment shoot from his brilliant eyes, and therefore needs he not the sense of hearing. Allah has taken from him in one respect, but has given to him most bounteously in another. He conceives the meanings of men from their looks, from movements of their lips,—to us imperceptible; he deciphers their thoughts expressed by the sinking or falling of the eyebrow, or the momentary play of the muscles of the mouth; he reads the heart through the bosom; and his eye pierces as deep as is permitted to mortal man. Oh, had I but always valued the advice of my good Megnoun as it deserved, how different would have been my situation now! My brother, my Abdallah, would have still been at my court, and I should still have possessed a real friend! When all conspired to blind me, when my senses were bewildered by calumnies, whose falsehoods I discovered too late, and whose author I still seek in vain, then did no voice speak in favour of Abdallah—none but Megnoun's! But I scorned the warning of the honest creature; my eyes were dazzled by the splendour of my newly mounted throne; my ears were filled with flattery; and I shut my heart against my brother. Oh! when I remember, while our father was yet in life, what an affectionate friend, what a cheerful

companion, what a disinterested adviser, what virtues and what talents once were mine in Abdallah; and how, from the moment that I mounted the throne, I repulsed him with that haughty coldness which by you and by my courtiers was termed necessary prudence; and how (oh, that was unjust, was tyrannical, was barbarous!)—and how I judged him to be guilty without hearing his defence! oh, Muzaffer, when I recollect all this, most heartily do I wish that *I* had been the younger brother, and that Abdallah had borne the sceptre in my place. I should have gained by the exchange, both in this world and the next: for I swear to you, Muzaffer, by the eternal splendour of heaven, that had *he* been caliph, Abdallah would not have condemned his brother unheard. No, he would not; for the actions of Abdallah were as just as his affections were tender; his head was as wise as his heart was good.

MUZAFFER.

Mighty lord, remember that Abdallah was *not* condemned by you; circumstances, whose illusion (as you say) you have since discovered, compelled you to believe him guilty; but, before you could adjudge his doom, he avoided your sentence by a disgraceful and suspicious flight.

THE CALIPH.

Muzaffer, you are generally skilful in pouring balsam into the wounds of my bosom; but this is too deep an ulcer, and defies your art. You succeed no further than in scarring it over, but the slightest emotion is able to rend it open anew.

MUZAFFER.

The too great sensibility of your heart, the over-stretched gentleness of your nature, were ever your greatest torments. Methinks, by this time, your every day's experience how little men deserve to excite such

feelings, and how little gratitude is returned by your subjects, might have taught you—

THE CALIPH.

And even allowing that men are undeserving, and that my subjects are ungrateful, what have I done to deserve their gratitude? It is true, my throne would be delightful as a bower in paradise, were I permitted to be as beneficent as it is my wish to be; but 'tis you who convert it into a bed of thorns, by still convincing me, that it is necessary to act with coldness and rule with severity. Be it so; but for that coldness and severity, vizir, must you answer at the day of judgment, since He who reads the heart knows well how foreign and how hateful they are to mine. Perhaps your lessons of government are correct, but Abdallah's were very different.

MUZAFFER.

And 'tis that very circumstance, mighty lord, which makes me suspect that the maintenance of your government was not sincerely wished by Abdallah; nay, which makes me even still doubt the reality of those discoveries by which you suppose his innocence to be so fully proved. If the prince was conscious of no fault, why did he betake himself to flight?

THE CALIPH.

He was compelled to fly—to fly from his brother: he fled to preserve his life—perhaps to preserve his brother from the commission of a crime! Oh, where is he now? In what miserable hut does he now hunger, while I revel here in superfluity, and lavish away the treasures of Arabia? In vain have my messengers traversed the globe; no vestige of my brother can be found! Perhaps he already appears as my accuser before the Eternal's throne, and the spirit of my father stands at his side! He is revenged. Better, far better would it be for me to suffer what *he* has suffered, than what *I* am doomed to

suffer now. The unjust monarch sits on his golden throne, and his heart is bleeding; but the blooming gardens of the prophet are open to the unjustly persecuted, and the fairest bower in paradise becomes his everlasting abode!

The grand vizir had heard these lamentations so often, and had always combated these reflections with so little success, that he at length made it a rule, whenever his sovereign touched upon this subject, to let him talk as long as he pleased, and content himself with listening in silence. He only now and then endeavoured to mark the interest, which he did *not* feel, by a sympathetic sigh, a melancholy movement of the head, or a look of pious resignation cast towards heaven—or rather towards the ceiling.

After a pause, the caliph resumed his discourse:—"But the lot is cast, and there is no recalling it. I have thrown away my natural friend; now I must be content to seek a friend in any one towards whom my vacant heart feels an inclination. It is true, you assure me (and indeed my own experience has sufficiently convinced me of the veracity of your assurance), that the caliph can only be loved for the sake of the influence and wealth which it is in the power of his friendship to bestow. I cannot change the nature of mankind; imperfect as they are made, such must I be content to take them. All that I now desire is this: that those on whom I bestow wealth and influence should employ them to the advantage of my people, and that they should still remember that the ministers to whom their indulgent sovereign confides his power, if they misuse it, are doubly culpable in the eyes of God and man."

Here, for this time, the conversation ended; but it was not long before the vizir brought Ben Hafi on the carpet again. He had frequently found that, when he could make the caliph heartily weary of a subject by frequently dwelling upon and repeating it, his master was glad to

free himself from the persecution by giving up the point. However, he always took special care to manage the business in such a manner, that the commander of the faithful believed, either that he gave his consent from his own free will and better judgment, or that he made an heroic sacrifice of the feelings of his heart to his love of justice and the severe duties of his exalted station.

Expecting similar success in the present instance, he again pressed the caliph on the subject of Ben Hafi; but the event did not answer his expectation. Amurath was proof against all his attacks, and at length asked him, "whether he was in truth afraid of the influence of this poor simple Hebrew?" The vizir's answer was a contemptuous smile.

"Then why are you so much his enemy?" rejoined the caliph; "trust me, Muzaffer, it does not please me when you express such aversion against a man whose conversation has beguiled your sovereign of so many heavy hours. Ben Hafi's tales, and descriptions of various countries and the manners which prevail in them, furnish me with much amusement while he is with me, and with much matter for reflection when I am alone. Often in discourse with him have I forgotten myself; and he who makes a monarch forget the sorrows of a throne, trust me, Muzaffer, can be no common man."

They were here interrupted by the little deaf Megnoun, whom the caliph had ordered to summon the Hebrew to the seraglio; the portal curtains were drawn back, and Ben Hafi entered.

The sun, when at mid-day he shines upon the ocean, is not brighter than the smile with which Muzaffer greeted Ben Hafi; the song of the nightingale, when he woos the rose, is not sweeter than the tone in which he bade him welcome. Oh, at that moment how Muzaffer must have hated him! Ben Hafi was seated on cushions arranged opposite to the caliph's sofa; the dwarf took his accustomed station at his master's feet; and now the

grand vizir seemed, by a respectful bow, to request permission to break silence. The permission was granted, and he thus addressed the object of his aversion and his fear.

"Worthy and wise Ben Hafi, there is a point (and that a point of no light importance) on which our lord the caliph has long differed from the humblest of his slaves, and which I have obtained his authority to submit to your experience in the nature of mankind. I maintain, that a sovereign, who has no other materials to work upon, and no other instrument to work with, than men, must govern his actions entirely according to the dictates of cool and unbiassed *prudence*, and without suffering himself to be in the least influenced by that most dangerous of all delusions, which is no less erroneous than dazzling—the *enthusiasm* of the heart. I maintain, that that government only can be of use to the *whole*, which is grounded upon a knowledge of the depravity, the baseness, the selfishness, the incapacity of the individuals, of whom that whole is composed; and that all those plans must come to nothing which are built upon the idea of ruling men through the medium of their good qualities, which aim at substituting the rewards of virtue for the dread of punishment; and whose foundation rests upon the belief, that to keep a kingdom in order and tranquillity, and render a people happy and contented, it is only necessary for a sovereign's views to be those of equity, benevolence, and foresight. I maintain also, that the black drop, which the angel Gabriel removed from the heart of Mahomet, exists in the hearts of all other children of Allah; that, on account of this innate depravity, the sovereign must possess a sceptre of iron as well as a sceptre of gold; that he will oftener find it necessary to use the first than the second; and that true wisdom will make him consider man merely as an animal, who must be compelled to do that which is useful, and abstain from

that which is pernicious; the one, by his passion for pleasure, the other, by his fear of pain.

"Such are my sentiments; I have the misfortune to find them disapproved of by my lord the caliph, and but too often have the still greater misfortune to see him act from sentiments in direct opposition to them."

THE CALIPH.

And if your opinion were just, Muzaffer, why, in the name of Allah, did nature give the king a heart as well as the beggar? In order to rule as you would have him, and yet not be the most miserable of earthly beings, a monarch should be born without the feelings of a man.

MUZAFFER.

The feelings of a man and the duties of a monarch are always different and always incompatible.

THE CALIPH.

If that be the case, I pity both; but most the monarch! —To dare confide in no one—to be deaf to the pleadings of benevolence—to repress all warm affections, all generous sensibilities, and to shut our bosoms against the whole world, at the very moment when the heart overflows towards the whole world with love, with friendship, with philanthropy—always to threaten—always to punish—always to be an object of alarm and aversion—to be cursed for all the ill that happens—to resign to ministers all the merit of the good which is done—to delight in conferring happiness, and yet to be obliged to resign the power of conferring happiness into the hands of others—oh! if this be indeed the lot of a sovereign, his lot is a dreadful one!

Lord of creation! unless you weigh my conduct by the measure of my good intentions, how shall thy servant stand upright before thee!

BEN HAFI.

Doubt it not, commander of the true believers! at

the last great day, our actions will be judged, not according to their consequences, but according to the views with which they were committed.

THE CALIPH.

I trust so, Ben Hafi; and therefore I will not repine that my seat is a throne rather than a couch of straw. On the throne, as well as in the peasant's hut, it is still possible to be virtuous; and surely the rewards of virtue will hereafter be proportioned according to the difficulty which its possessor found in retaining it. Were not this the case, alas! how much to be pitied would be the great ones of the earth!—

But we have wandered from Muzaffer's dispute with me. Tell me, Ben Hafi, (and speak without reserve,) is it better, that a man—(you hear that I say a *man*, and not a *monarch*, for, in spite of all my vizir's arguments, I cannot help flattering myself, that they are the same)—is it, I say, better that a man should act according to the warmth and enthusiasm of his heart, or that he should merely obey the dictates of that cold discretion, which, before a step is taken, weighs its merits in the nicest balance, and examines it with the severest scrutiny?

Do not answer, that the right thing is to make a proper use of both; I know that already. But I wish you to decide between two people, who seldom can make prudence and enthusiasm walk hand in hand. Muzaffer sees me act imprudently without thinking of anything but how to confer pleasure, and then he shakes his head: on the other hand I see him act discreetly without caring whether he inflicts pain, and then I feel that my heart is bleeding. Both of us are in the wrong; but which of us is most so?"—

Ben Hafi paused for a few moments; at length he raised his head, and the genius of inspiration sparkled in his expressive eyes.

"Commander of the Faithful!" said he, "the life of

an illustrious person, who still exists, will be the best answer to your important question. Am I permitted to relate his adventures?"

"By all means, Ben Hafi," answered the Caliph, "and you shall have not merely my permission, but my thanks: your narratives please me well, especially when they are wonderful; and, if any spirits or genii should appear in the course of your story, they will be extremely welcome, and I shall like your discourse the better—that is, provided always, that your story be no fiction.—And now then, begin your narrative, my good Ben Hafi."

The Hebrew bowed his head, and commenced his tale as follows.

CHAPTER II.

—"Ah! if those dreams fallacious prove,
Which paint the world so fair;
If Heaven has placed for virtuous love
No blest asylum there;
If men fair fame, fair faith deride,
Bent on those crooked paths, which guide
To Interest's sordid shrine,
Be yours, ye gloomy sons of woe,
The melancholy truth to know,
The dream of bliss be mine."—MERCER.

THE words of power were spoken, and a thick grey cloud came rolling from the north. In its passage over the mountain Caucasus its shadow fell on the pavilion of mortal excellence, and immediately the bright picture was obscured on which the Genius Gela-Eddin was gazing.

The roof of this brilliant pavilion is formed of moonshine; the golden columns on which it rests are beams of the sun, and in number a thousand and thirty; its walls are composed of woven ether, meteor-fires, and the condensed evaporations of aromatic shrubs and flowers.

A profusion of falling stars is showered over the whole pavilion, and it floats upon the clouds of autumnal evenings, which form for it a floor of the most brilliant crimson.

This is the abode of the spotless and generous spirits of those, who while on earth dignified and enlightened human nature by their virtues, and who have purchased for themselves after death a seat in the society of the pure genii, by their glorious actions and by self-devotion to the general good.

Gela-Eddin, a superior genius, equally endowed with the love and the light of truth, is the happy ruler of these illustrious spirits.

On the ethereal walls of this pavilion are continually represented every noble and virtuous action, from the first instant of its suggesting itself to the moment of its completion. Nothing can be more brilliant, nothing more soft, than the colours of which these pictures are composed; unlike those of earth, instead of fading they become more bright and fresh with each succeeding day, except when the celestial motive which animates their authors is obscured and tarnished by weakness, apprehension, self-interest, indolence, uncertainty respecting the consequences, or reflection on the little merits of those for whose benefit the noble action is intended.

But when a mortal, even to the moment of dissolution, remains faithful to the heavenly inspiration which incites him to glorious deeds; when the lamp of his life in expiring still throws forth a flame, which warms and enlightens posterity with the remembrance of his virtues, then does the whole pavilion blaze with celestial radiance! The reflection of this sacred shining light pierces through the thick vapours which compose our atmosphere, and illumines the horizon with a soft trembling glow. The pilgrim stops, and gazes in rapture on the lovely vision; the ignorant man of wisdom affixes to it some unmeaning name, and leaves the matter just where he found it;

and the natural philosopher accounts for the phenomenon falsely, and astonishes his auditor at the profundity of his science.

The setting sun poured its lustre through the transparent pavilion, gilded its roof and pavement, and illuminated the pictures on the walls of ether; the spirits of the pure enjoyed in silent rapture the sight of the glorious actions of the good on earth; when suddenly the airy fabric trembled to its very base, a chilling wind breathed through the pavilion, and the words of power ascended from the rolling globe beneath.

The spirits of the pure veiled their heads in sorrow, for at that moment the picture, which displayed the conduct of one of the noblest of their earthly brethren, grew dim upon the brilliant wall.

The Genius Gela-Eddin approached the pavilion's entrance, extended his wand, and arrested the further progress of the grey and frozen cloud.

"Who art thou?" inquired Gela-Eddin; "by whom art thou summoned, and on what business?"

A voice issued from the midst of the cloud—"powerful Gela-Eddin! I am a spirit of the frozen ocean; one of those who inhabit the islands of chilness and gloom; who sometimes, careless of all sublunary things, float in the atmosphere which everywhere surrounds and supports the earth, and at other times descend into the lower restless whirling air which mortals breathe, at once to govern and obey them; who are by turns their slaves and rulers, their enemies and friends; who now injure them, now benefit; but who equally in benefits or injuries feel for them neither love nor hate."

Gela-Eddin. And whither is thy course addressed? Why hast thou left thy gloomy islands?

The Voice. Amorassan summons me, and I dare not resist his voice: he calls me in the name of Solomon the powerful and the wise!

Gela-Eddin. Amorassan? the grand-vizir of Guzurat?

the friend and favourite of its sultan? who has hitherto trod that crooked, slippery path with steps so bold and steady? how can the glowing heart of Amorassan ever have desired *thy* aid?

The Voice. His heart is wounded by the perverseness and treachery of mankind; he is disappointed by the worthlessness of those with whom he is destined to exist, and for whose welfare he has till now still lived and laboured: he who has hitherto undertaken every right action, merely because he felt that it *was* right, will now weigh his proceedings, not by their motive but only by their consequences: keen foresight, exact judgment, and justice impartial and severe, must henceforth freeze the ardour of his feelings, and overpower the voice of his heart. But, hark! the charm is repeated! the powerful words ascend even to the clouds!—mighty Gela-Eddin, delay my flight no longer!

The Genius sighed as he dropped his wand, and a tear glittered in his eye, when he saw the grey cloud hover over the palace of Amorassan.

THE CALIPH.

My good Ben Hafi, before we quit this wonderful pavilion, I cannot help saying, that I never remember to have observed the brilliant show in the skies, which, according to your account, displays itself upon the reception of a mortal into the society of those same pure spirits. During the whole time that I have been upon the throne, not once have I witnessed such a sight. Does this proceed from my own want of observation? Perhaps the chief persons of my kingdom have done nothing worthy of being represented on those ethereal walls. Alas! men must still be men—it is not in the power of a mere man to mend them!

MUZAFFER.

Permit me to inquire, whether the evil deeds of mor-

tals, as well as their good, were not all represented on the walls of this pavilion?

THE CALIPH.

Allah protect us! No, to be sure not, Muzaffer! Why, if all the wicked and foolish things which are done on earth, were to be represented, the very vault of heaven itself would not be able to contain them. But now then, Hafi, let us hear more about this Amorassan; I am curious to know what made the Genius sigh so piteously on his account; for I protest, at present, his resolution appears to me to be a very wise one.

CHAPTER III.

—"A thousand glorious systems he designed;
A thousand great ideas filled his mind;
But with the clouds they fled, and left no trace behind."—THOMSON.

BEN HAFI.

AMORASSAN, the grand-vizir of Guzurat, was such a man—as grand-vizirs seldom are. He was his master's favourite, and yet was he more the friend of the people than the servant of the monarch; he governed everything, and yet was he less anxious for the glory of the kingdom than for the happiness of those whom it contained; he was grand-vizir, and yet he valued his place more because it enabled him to promote the welfare of the sultan's subjects, than because it furnished him with opportunities to preserve the sultan's favour; though it was to that favour alone that he was indebted for his place, and that he could expect to preserve it. In short, he was the minister of Guzurat, not of its sultan.

THE CALIPH.

Stop one moment, Ben Hafi: do you recollect, that I

requested you to introduce no fiction in your narrative? It requires a large portion of confidence in your veracity to believe the existence of such a man as this Amorassan: and, even if there should be such a man as this, how could he ever come to be a grand-vizir? He seems to me totally unfit for the situation; and though I heartily wish that *my* grand-vizir should be as anxious for the good of my people as for my own, yet, were I in the place of this sultan of Guzurat, I am not certain that I should be quite pleased to hear my grand-vizir call himself more the people's minister than mine: at least, if I *were* quite pleased, I must be in an uncommonly good humour at the time, that is certain.

MUZAFFER.

Ay! ay! such a grand-vizir is only good in a tale.

THE CALIPH.

And why should he not be good *out* of a tale? Trust me, Muzaffer, were *you* to think like this Amorassan, I should not be at all displeased; provided always, that you kept in memory that you are totally dependent on my sole will and pleasure, and that the same breath which has elevated you to the highest office can degrade you again to the very lowest!

BEN HAFI.

Even that thought inspired Amorassan with no fear.

THE CALIPH.

No? What then *did* he fear?

BEN HAFI.

To act unjustly.

THE CALIPH.

When Abdallah was here, there was one in my court who thought so too! Ah! that is past!—Proceed, Ben Hafi.

BEN HAFI.

Amorassan, Commander of the Faithful, was one of those men, who, inflamed with enthusiastic admiration of the good and fair, are capable of undertaking and executing plans, whose accomplishment seems to require the life of an ante-diluvian. Such a man is seldom happy; nay, to prevent his being totally miserable, it requires him to possess firmness enough to forgive every fault in others, while he excuses none in himself; it requires, that his experience in the nature of those *with* whom, and *for* whom he labours, should produce no more effect upon his heart and temper, than vapours produce upon the sun; which can do no more than obtrude themselves between the planetary sovereign and the human eye in the form of clouds, and which soon, overcome by his warmth, fall down again in fruitful showers to freshen and fertilize the earth.

The man who can persevere with unabated ardour in labouring for the good of human kind, in spite of every day's conviction of human depravity, that man alone is perfect. Such a man would I gladly see, but the world has never seen one yet.

Amorassan's heart was the most tender, his sympathy the most warm, his courage the most undaunted, his activity the most indefatigable: he wished ardently what was right, and he no sooner perceived that good might be done, than he hastened to do it. But he who hurries on with too much eagerness and rapidity, is frequently apt to overshoot the goal, and, by not allowing himself time to take every necessary precaution, he sometimes runs the risk of failing in his object: he cannot do everything himself; he must employ agents, whom he finds it difficult to inspire with the same enthusiastic ardour for the execution of his benevolent projects, which animated their projector when he formed them: nay, sometimes, he will find himself counteracted by those very agents,

because they find his plan conducive to the general good, but tending to their individual disadvantage. Amorassan believed that, could he only prove that his schemes aimed at the universal benefit, self-interest would induce mankind to forward their execution: he was not aware that the universal good is an object too remote and too uncertain to excite very warm sensibilities, and that few men act with ardour and spirit in affairs with which their personal and particular advantage is not in some degree connected. Amorassan thought that, when he had found men *able* enough to execute his schemes, everything was done; their own common sense would be sufficient to make them *willing*. So erroneous did he find this opinion, that much which he had designed in the true spirit and with all the fire of the most extensive philanthropy, was so marred in the execution, that he started back appalled at the sight of his disfigured work, and found that he had earned curses, where he had sown blessings with such labour and such care.

Amorassan, however, was not of so weak a mind as to be easily driven from his glorious career by difficulties or disappointments. The consciousness of his good intentions consoled him; and the sultan did him justice, even when both the court and the country murmured.

This sultan (his name was Ibrahim) was in truth a very good kind of man: his greatest fault was, that he was totally dependent on those who possessed his confidence. His heart was warm and susceptible; his imagination was easily inflamed, and he was possessed by a most inordinate desire to obtain renown. The enlarged and glorious plans of his grand-vizir dazzled and enchanted him; and there were moments when, in the warmth of his enthusiasm for virtue, he would have obeyed Amorassan, even had he been advised by him to exchange his throne for the cell of a dervise. The love of virtue, the abhorrence of vice, the sacrifice of self; philanthropy to wish, resolution to decide, and vigour to execute; all

these were communicated to him by Amorassan: but that which alone could give duration to these qualities, he did not possess from nature, and Amorassan could not impart it:—the sultan had no firmness of character.

Yet this defect was not only a secret to the sultan himself, but even to his minister. The former adopted all the sentiments, and entered into all the ideas, of the latter with such ardour, that both were equally delighted with the apparent sympathy: yet, in truth, not one of these ideas and sentiments originated with the sultan. He only echoed back with enthusiasm in the evening what he heard from Amorassan with such pleasure in the morning; and while the one employed, and the other witnessed, the same language, the same looks, and the same gestures, neither suspected that the sultan's share in the business was a mere effort of recollection, in which the head and the heart had but very little concern.

Among the courtiers by whom the throne of Guzurat was surrounded, Ebu-Beker, the son of the late chief cadi, was numbered. The sultan neither loved nor esteemed him, but his society was agreeable to him; and I have heard persons conversant in the arts of courts affirm, that to inspire this sentiment is the surest means of reaching preferment. The friend or the favourite must inspire a degree of enthusiasm, which becomes insipid unless it increases daily, and which, when it has reached a certain height, can increase no further: attachment then gradually cools into esteem; enthusiasm subsides; defects become visible, and the sovereign feels disappointed. But the man who is merely suffered as an agreeable companion, and who pretends to nothing more than to amuse, gradually and imperceptibly continues to rise in favour, till his society becomes a habit, and the prince finds it so necessary, that it is impossible for him to do without it.

Of all this Ebu-Beker was well convinced. He therefore never transgressed the bounds prescribed to him;

professed on all occasions the most profound admiration of the sultan; and, by throwing himself into the shade, contrived to make his master's merits shine with greater lustre. This conduct was highly agreeable to the person whom it was designed to please. In Amorassan's company, Ibrahim could not help being conscious that he was inferior to his minister; in Ebu-Beker's, he was exalted in his own opinion, and he felt grateful to the author of this agreeable sensation. It is true, he had still no great opinion of Ebu-Beker's talents; but he gave him credit for what was a much higher merit in his opinion—*i. e.* the most unbounded admiration of the sultan's own exalted person.

Ibrahim's attachment to his minister, however, had as yet suffered no diminution: he still considered him as the firmest support of his throne, as the brightest ornament of his court, as the most active instrument for promoting the welfare of his people, and consequently of their sovereign. Nothing, therefore, was less agreeable to Ibrahim than to find fault with his friend, or put a negative upon the benevolent plans which his brilliant genius continually suggested. Yet he did this upon some occasions, which Amorassan considered as of too great importance to abandon without extreme pain; and as he was too keen-sighted not to discover, that this opposition proceeded less from the sultan himself than from the private insinuations of Ebu-Beker, he grieved to see his master subject to such unworthy influence, and his brow became clouded with vexation and discontent.

Discontent and vexation are but sorry recommendations to the favour of the great. The sultan was surprised to find, that Amorassan was become a less pleasing companion, and Ebu-Beker's society gained by the comparison. The friendship between the sovereign and his minister had indeed now reached the highest point; it had not decreased, but it remained stationary; and this is a situation almost as dangerous in a monarch's favour

as in a mistress's love, since both depend in a great degree upon that enthusiasm which delights in the boundless, the excessive, and the undefined.

THE CALIPH.

Shall I tell you the truth, Ben Hafi? All this may be very just, and very wise; but I find it extremely tedious, and you would oblige me by being a little less sensible in future and rather more entertaining. I confess, I regret the pavilion and the Genius Gela-Eddin, and should be glad to hear something more about the voice which came out of the cloud.

BEN HAFI.

Grant me your patience for a few moments, and your wish shall be obeyed.

Amorassan's ill humour was further increased by discovering the worthlessness of several of those persons to whom he had confided the execution of his plans, and whose talents and knowledge made their offence the more unpardonable. He found himself betrayed, deceived, disappointed, and disgusted; misanthropy began to steal insensibly into his bosom; and it was in this dangerous temper of mind that an Egyptian was brought before him, many mysterious circumstances respecting whom had caused him to be suspected of sorcery.

The Egyptian easily read in the minister's eye an inclination to become better acquainted with his scientific secrets. They had many private conversations together; and no sooner did the necromancer hint at certain cabalistical words, whose power could give the speaker absolute authority over spirits of a higher sphere, than this thought darted like a flash of lightning through his hearer's brain:—"To become the lord of such a being is the only certain means of enabling me to execute my great and glorious plans!"

"Yes," said he to himself, "could I but once see

clearly into the hearts of men, my design would then be certain of success; I should then be armed against deception, might select none but fit instruments, and could reckon upon gathering securely the fruit of my benevolent labours. Yet hold! to be proof against the illusions of others is not enough; I must also be guarded against those of my own heart. The being whom I need, must not only warn me against the hypocrisy and artifices of my fellows, but against the deceitful enthusiasm of love, of friendship, and even of mistaken virtues. I must be enabled to read the human soul, to distinguish the semblance from the reality, to see beforehand the consequences of my own actions, and those of others, and to remove from my senses all those deceitful clouds with which sympathy, imagination, and the passions, obscure the sight of men, and misguide their footsteps."

Inflamed with the most ardent love for all that was good and noble, the heart of Amorassan bounded with rapture, when he heard the assertion, that it lay in his own choice to realize this glorious vision. He became the Egyptian's scholar; the further that he advanced in the acquisition of the secret sciences, the more was he delighted with the beauty, the grandeur, and the utility of his views. His mysterious education was now completed: he was master of the important words which enabled him to summon to his aid an immortal spirit. The Egyptian's labour was rewarded with life and liberty; he immediately departed from Ahmedabad; and Amorassan now lost no time in commencing his magical operations.

THE CALIPH.

I am heartily glad to hear it! Now, then, we shall meet again with the voice out of the thick grey cloud. But I declare to you, Ben Hafi, that I can as yet see no reason why the Genius Gela-Eddin should have sighed. It seems to me, that Amorassan's plan was a very discreet

one; and I should like to have just such a spirit myself continually at my elbow, to give me a hint when my courtiers speak truth, and when they are deceiving me.

Ten years ago, had I possessed such a warning spirit, my brother would still have been here.

CHAPTER IV.

—"Charm his eye, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows; so depart!"—*Macbeth.*

AMORASSAN'S whole frame trembled with impatience while he pronounced the powerful charm. He stood in the midst of the most retired apartment of his palace; the doors and windows were all carefully closed; light was excluded, except what proceeded from a golden chafing-dish which stood before him, and in which, at intervals, he burned perfumes and various other ingredients of magic efficacy. The spell was complete; thrice had he pronounced it in the awful name of Solomon, the powerful and the wise; and now a thick grey cloud descending into the room, hovered awhile over the chafing-dish, and then spread itself through the whole apartment.

Gradually it dispersed; and now Amorassan beheld a female figure, the faultless perfection of whose form and features sufficiently assured him that she was no terrestrial being. Her robes were of the purest white; and her veil, which was thrown backwards and fell to her very feet, was fastened upon her brow by a garland of white roses; but the mildew had sullied every leaf, and in every flower there lurked a canker. Her forehead was smooth and fair as polished ivory. Her eyes, darker than jet or ebony, were large and bright; but their lustre resembled the shining of crystal rather than the sparkling of diamonds: no fire emanated from their orbs

to light up her countenance, and she always bent them straight before her with a fixed and steady gaze. Her eyebrows were formed in the softest and most regular curve. Her full bosom betrayed not the gentle rise and fall of respiration, much less did it seem to have been ever agitated by the tempest of the furious passions; the breath of life was not perceived to impart its warmth to her lips, as red and as cold as coral; much less had they ever burned with the fiery blast of desire. Never had either joy or sorrow drawn a wrinkle round that lovely mouth; and her smooth and blooming cheeks were equally unconscious of the tears of pain and the smiles of pleasure. Every feature was modelled in the most exquisite and most harmonious proportions. Never did the poet's dream present an image of such faultless beauty as that which now stood before Amorassan. Ideal perfection was here embodied; but yet the whole appeared so cold, so indifferent, so insensible, that, though the first glance was that of admiration, the second was accompanied by a sensation of uneasiness and anxiety indescribably disagreeable and painful. In vain did Amorassan gaze upon those celestial features; in her whole face could he not discover the slightest trace of character, not even the most distant shadow of expression, which could point out the way to the heart, or give a clue to the sentiments of its possessor.

With her hands folded upon her bosom, the spirit stood fixed before Amorassan, silent and motionless. Equally overpowered by her exalted nature, by her surprising loveliness, by the dignity of her demeanour, and by the killing coldness of her look, he sought in vain in her countenance for something of that expression which encourages us to address a person still unknown. At length he said, in a subdued voice, while he felt his respiration so oppressed that he could only pronounce his words with difficulty, "Answer! What art thou?"

The Spirit. She whom you summoned, and whom

you need; a spirit from the islands of chilness and gloom. Does not my countenance tell you that I am the right?

Amorassan. I know not yet; I can only feel at present that the sight of you congeals the blood in my veins. You are beautiful as the light of day; yet deformity would be less painful to me, for that, at least, must possess some expression.

The Spirit. That want of expression proves that I am the very spirit whom you need. But if you like me not, being such as I am and must remain, dismiss me. To me it matters not where I am, whether here or elsewhere; whether I bask in the warm sunbeams, or bathe in the cold damp vapours of the islands of chilness and gloom; for to me the sunbeams are not warm, nor the damp vapours cold. I will serve you, if you command it; I will leave you, if you permit me, and either way shall be equally well pleased.

Amorassan. Tell me, thou frosty being, knowest thou the word *virtue?*

The Spirit. I have sometimes heard it mentioned, but it is no concern of mine.

Amorassan. No? And *vice*, then?

The Spirit. Oh! that I have heard mentioned much oftener; but that is no concern of mine, either. I used to hear much about such things when I lived in the court of Solomon.

Amorassan. Of Solomon the Wise?

The Spirit. Ay, the Wise, as he was called. I was his slave, and in his latter years his constant companion. It was in my society that he learned that everything on earth is vanity.

Amorassan. What! even what he had done for his own pleasure and advantage?

The Spirit. Even that; and as soon as this last point was ascertained he dismissed me. Since that time I have inhabited the islands of chilness and gloom, which exist in the Frozen Ocean.

Amorassan. From so melancholy an abode you must needs be pleased at your deliverance.

The Spirit. Melancholy? What is melancholy?—Pleased! Nothing pleases or displeases me.

Amorassan. Feelest thou neither liking nor disliking, neither love nor aversion?

The Spirit. Of all this I know nothing; and therefore am I the very spirit whom you need.

Amorassan. Then it is a matter of indifference to you how I employ you; and you will execute evil as cheerfully as good, good with as little remorse as evil.

The Spirit. Good! Evil! All this is your affair, not mine.

Amorassan. Unfeeling spirit! You grieve my very heart.

The Spirit. May be so; but the grief of your heart is no concern of mine. Why, at that declaration, is your countenance so suddenly overcast? What strange things are mortals! Now that you have found in me the spirit you desired, you recoil with horror at the fulfilment of your own wish. Ah! I see that the sons of earth are not changed since Solomon's time.

Amorassan. And what then is man in your opinion?

The Spirit. He is not that which he fain would be; and, were he everything which he wishes to be to-day, he would wish to-morrow to be that again which he was yesterday. Now then, inform me, in your turn, why am I summoned hither?

Amorassan. I wish to make the people of Guzurat content and happy.

The Spirit. And what, then, is thy station?

Amorassan. I am Guzurat's grand vizir, and its sultan's favourite.

The Spirit. Oh, wise and powerful Solomon! then at least one of thy sayings is false.

Amorassan. And which is that?

The Spirit. "There is nothing new under the sun." And how wouldst thou have me help thee?

Amorassan. Guard me against others—still more against myself. Unmask the wilful hypocrisy of those who surround me, and dispel the involuntary illusions of my own enthusiastic heart.

The Spirit. Thou shalt be obeyed. No sooner does my chilling breath fall upon her, than falsehood perishes; there is no veil so thick that my piercing eye cannot penetrate it. Neither the sweet voice of praise, be it flattering or sincere; nor the mouth's enchanting smile, be it artificial or natural; nor the look expressive of good will, be it worn from real feeling or assumed to serve a momentary purpose; nor the overflowings of the warm heart, whether they arise from a wish to deceive or from the enthusiasm of the moment; none of these can mislead *me.* Nor am I more bewildered by the brilliant dreams of imagination, or tempted from my steady course by the melodious pleading of sentiment. Love and friendship wave their torches before me in vain; I gaze steadily on that which is wise and true, and their glare can neither dazzle my sight, nor their vapours obscure my object.

Amorassan, speak but the word, and nothing shall henceforth deceive you. You shall see men and things as they really are; you shall see your own heart as it really is, and as it will be.

Amorassan. I speak that word, and from this moment date the commencement of my bosom's peace. Now then I can execute my glorious plans without fear of treachery or of my own weakness. The happiness of Guzurat and of its monarch is secure, and my friend may defy the malice of his enemies!

The Spirit. All this concerns not *me.*

Amorassan. Insensible being! what, then, *does* concern you? At least you must love yourself; and, caring so little for the happiness of others, probably you care the more anxiously for your own?

The Spirit. Happiness! my own! myself! These

are all words quite unknown to me. Happiness! I have heard it spoken of. But as for me—I neither weep nor smile; and, except smiling and weeping, I see nothing of consequence which men do on earth; whatever lies between these two only serves to conduct either to the one or to the other.

Amorassan. Talk not thou of what men do. A being so destitute of all feeling is not fit to mix with human creatures!

The Spirit. That is true, and therefore am I exactly fitted for the associate of a man like yourself; unless you have already forgotten the object for which you have called me hither.

Amorassan. Leave me! I feel ill at ease in your society.

The Spirit. In yours I feel neither ill nor well. But now the bond between us is become indissoluble. I must henceforth be your constant attendant, and aid you to unravel the web which destiny has woven for you. Your future fortunes are well known to me; but I am only permitted to lay the leaves open before you one by one. Had I been permitted to read the *last* leaf, then I should also have known how long I have to remain your slave; but this contained my own destiny, and the volume was suddenly closed.

Amorassan. And does this grieve you?

The Spirit. Nothing grieves or pleases me?

Amorassan. Leave me!—Yet stay! When I require your aid, by what name must I summon you?

The Spirit. I am called "the nameless one;" you will bestow on me a better name hereafter. But, whenever my ministry is needful, I shall stand before you uncalled, and invisible to all eyes but yours. Of this be assured, for your master and mine has enjoined it.

Amorassan. There is much more which I would gladly ask; but my heart feels changed to ice by that chilling look. Retire till my blood has regained sufficient

warmth, and my heart sufficient feeling, to support your presence. Leave me! Begone!

The thick grey cloud again spread itself through the apartment. It rose into the air, and when it dispersed the Spirit was no longer visible.

THE CALIPH.

Now trust me, Ben Hafi,, I am heartily pleased with her departure: this freezing Spirit has produced just the same effect upon me, as upon Amorassan; and her wearisome insensibility has entirely cured me of the wish to have such a being at my elbow.

MUZAFFER.

Amiable, in truth, this Spirit is not; but still she must probably be of great utility in the service of a grand-vizir; at least, she will enable Amorassan to see through the veil of humility and disinterestedness, with which hypocrites so frequently conceal their private views with the most success and the least suspicion. Ben Hafi, the sultan waits for the remainder of your tale.

(Ben Hafi marked well the malignant glance with which this speech was accompanied, and the insinuation which it was designed to convey. But he answered not, and thus continued his discourse.)

CHAPTER V.

—"Oh! how wretched
Is that poor man, who hangs on princes' favours!
There is between that smile we would aspire to,
That sweet aspect of princes and our ruin,
More hopes and fears than war or women have."
Henry the Eighth.

Some hours elapsed before Amorassan recovered from the effect produced upon him by the Spirit's freezing demeanour. But, with the return of day, all his glori-

ous visions for the happiness of mankind resumed their influence over his mind with renewed vigour; and he rejoiced in the prospect of being now able to carry them into execution without fear of further disappointments. The light of virtue irradiated his whole soul; and envy, treachery, self-interest and hypocrisy, alike virtue's foes and Amorassan's, fled from its piercing beams, as ghosts from the splendour of the approaching sunshine.

The governor of the frontier province of Burglana was deceased, and it was necessary to consult the sultan respecting the disposal of this important place. Ibrahim had slept well, was in high spirits, and received his vizir with a smile of such good will as touched him to the very heart. That it had produced this effect was evident, and the consciousness of having afforded satisfaction increased the sultan's. He welcomed Amorassan in the most engaging manner, and marked by his reception that he considered him as the companion of his youth, as the friend of his selection, as the favourite of his heart, and the partner of his most secret thoughts. With every moment their discourse became more warm and more confidential: and, as their intercourse had rather languished for the last few months, this unexpected renewal of affection was doubly grateful to the sympathizing heart of Amorassan.

That heart now lay expanded before the sultan's eyes: the vizir laid open his distant glorious plans for the prosperity of Guzurat; his eyes floated in dews of rapture while he dwelt upon them, and the spirit of inspiration seemed to flutter round his lips.

Ibrahim entered into all his feelings, approved of all his plans, echoed back all his wishes. Amorassan's soul overflowed with gratitude, and his satisfaction seemed to be complete, when his sovereign, taking his hand, and fixing his eyes on his face with a smile of benevolence, informed him, "that *he* too had a plan to propose, and a wish to be complied with." Already did the assurance

of his ready and unconstrained consent float upon the lips of the indulgent Amorassan, when suddenly, in the further part of the saloon, he perceived the Spirit with all her calmness, coldness, and oppressive gravity. Her right hand pointed to the sultan with a warning gesture; the fore-finger of the left was placed against her lip, as if enjoining silence.

The colour instantly fled from Amorassan's cheeks; he gazed steadfastly upon the vision; the fire of enthusiasm was extinguished in his eyes, and the assurance, which he had already unclosed his lips to give, dissolved into unintelligible murmurs.

Ibrahim drew his hand away; he gazed upon his vizir in astonishment; and the cold constraint of Amorassan's manner produced a corresponding change in his own. After a pause, he said with an embarrassed air—"Perhaps, you already guess what I am going to propose. Perhaps, you are unwilling to comply with my wish in this respect?"

Amorassan. I have not the most distant suspicion of your plan. Nor can I feel unwilling to comply with any wish of yours; of yours, whose wishes are commands.

Ibrahim. Ah! when I mentioned to you that I had a wish, it was not the master who spoke to his servant, but Ibrahim to Amorassan! true, I command, when I address my vizir; but when I converse with my friend, I can but wish, and am only happy in the completion of my wish, if it meet with my friend's approbation.

Amorassan. Then name your wish; surely you need not now be assured that Amorassan would think your satisfaction cheaply bought by the sacrifice of his existence!

Ibrahim. Some other time, when you are again in the same disposition—when your manner is the same—when your heart is as harmoniously attuned to mine, as it was this morning when you first addressed me. 'Tis very strange! What could occasion in you so sudden an

alteration? Nay, own the truth, Amorassan: you certainly must have *guessed* what it was that I intended to propose to you.

Amorassan. I did not.

Ibrahim. So dry? So brief?

Amorassan. To convince you of a truth hitherto a single word of mine has been thought by you sufficient.

Ibrahim. Well then! there let the business rest. Perhaps the unaccountable hesitation in your manner, which communicated itself to mine, and made me in my turn hesitate, was a secret warning to weigh the matter more carefully before I submitted it to your inspection. I will follow the advice, and now let us call another subject.

The conversation then turned entirely upon topics of indifference. Amorassan vainly endeavoured to recover his former ease; he was absent, embarrassed, and the discourse languished. At length Ibrahim relieved both his vizir and himself by suffering him to depart, and Amorassan hastened homeward. No sooner was he alone in his palace than the Spirit presented herself before him.

The Spirit. You see that I am faithful to my promise; I have not waited for your summoning me.

Amorassan. Answer without delay; what meant your unexpected appearance even now at the seraglio?

The Spirit. I appeared to fulfil your injunctions, and warn you against yourself. Fascinated by the delightful feelings of gratitude and friendship, intoxicated by your sovereign's flattering praise, and overpowered by the condescending marks of his affection, you were on the point of promising to comply with his wishes, without giving yourself time to learn, whether they were wishes with which it would be right or prudent to comply. I appeared to prevent your contracting this rash engagement, and at my presence your fond illusion fled.

Amorassan. And even had I formed the engagement, would he have held me to it if it proved to be either

imprudent or wrong? No; Ibrahim himself would not then have wished the engagement to be kept. What he had asked, and I had granted, in the warmth of affection—

The Spirit. Affection? Affection for *you?* The sultan's kindness this morning took its rise from quite another source.

Amorassan. Is then the sultan my friend no longer?

The Spirit. It is evident that he is still your friend, since he endeavoured to *entice* you artfully into doing that which otherwise he would have *commanded.* In truth, the wish to ensnare a person into doing anything, is no proof of an honest or manly heart; but it proves, at least, that the sultan esteems the friend, loves the favourite, and wishes to preserve the grand-vizir.

Amorassan. And what then was it that the sultan was about to propose?

The Spirit. He ardently desired to entice you into consenting, that the place of chief cadi should be given to a certain Ebu-Beker, whose father formerly possessed it.

Amorassan. And your appearance prevented me from giving this so much-wished consent? Fatal being! you have deprived me of one of the happiest moments of my existence.

The Spirit. Nothing is more probable! but that is no concern of mine. I have done my duty, and only done it, because it *was* my duty; if you found pain in it, I found no pleasure, for pleasure and pain are alike to me.

Amorassan. Oh! had you not appeared—had I but followed the emotions of my heart! This Ebu-Beker is my mortal enemy; I know well the plans which he has laid for my destruction; I would have made every thing known to the sultan. I would have shown him how deadly the man hates me; I would have pointed out to him the personal dangers to which his elevation would expose me; and then I would have fallen at the feet of my friend, and told him—"and all these considerations

do I sacrifice to your wish! Let Ebu-Beker occupy the wished-for place; not that station alone, but my own, would I surrender to him with good will, could it afford my sovereign the slightest gratification. Let Ebu-Beker still be my enemy; Amorassan shall henceforth be his friend, since Ibrahim values him!"—But now, instead of this, when the sultan's heart was open—when his kindness was so warm—to repulse him by my chilling air—to make him so naturally believe, that I guessed his wish and prepared myself to counteract it! Away from my presence, thou cold insensible spirit! I hate thee!

The Spirit. Indeed? already? But as you please! I expect no other reward from *men*. And have you then forgotten the secret character of this Ebu-Beker, to whom you are so ready to resign your station, and with it the care of the happiness of Guzurat? Is he not avaricious, luxurious, envious, cruel and malignant? Are not his principles, his views, his plans of government, exactly the reverse of yours? You would have told the sultan that he is your mortal enemy? Think you that this is not already known to the sultan? Were he ignorant that Ebu-Beker hates and has injured you, and that you have reason to hate Ebu-Beker, would he have endeavoured by an artifice to ensnare you into consenting to his elevation? However, in what regards the resignation of your own station to him, respecting that step you need be in no haste: let him only obtain the place of chief cadi, which is now his object, and that of grand-vizir will soon follow it.

Amorassan. Of grand-vizir? Ebu-Beker grand-vizir?

The Spirit. Infallibly—unless indeed you adopt the courtier's policy, and destroy your rival before he has time to destroy *you*.

Amorassan. Is it even so? nay, then, the sultan's affections must be totally withdrawn from me, and from this moment I have nothing more left to care for. I never made but two requests to Allah: the first to retain Ibra-

him's friendship; the second to make him happy through his people and his people happy through *him*. The loss of my power could only grieve me, if Guzurat and its monarch should lose under my successor those advantages which they have acquired under me, and those which I hoped they would acquire still further—but the loss of Ibrahim's friendship——

The Spirit. Said I that you have lost it? No; you possess it still; will still possess it—even when he bestows your station on your rival. The sultan himself will lament the necessity which occasions your fall: he will shed more tears at parting than yourself, and those tears will be sincere: he will regret your absence, will miss your society with every hour of the day——

Amorassan. And will yet part with me?

The Spirit. And will yet part with you—for Ebu-Beker will have it so.

Amorassan. Ebu-Beker! Can the cold-hearted, malignant unfeeling Ebu-Beker, he who is unable to sympathize with one of the generous Ibrahim's emotions, can *he* possess such influence over the sultan's heart.

The Spirit. Of the Sultan's heart he possesses no share, and never will possess any; but he is the master of that which often has more influence over a sovereign than the heart, and by which the heart itself is frequently misled. —Ebu-Beker is master of the key to Ibrahim's imagination: he is skilful in the art of showing the sultan *to* the sultan in a light in which he appears to be much greater, much wiser, much more brilliant and majestic than he either *is*, or *will*, or *can* be. Such a man is not esteemed by a sovereign; but before the thing is even suspected his presence becomes indispensable. Ebu-Beker is determined upon your ruin: the sultan will resist awhile, but friendship will at length yield to necessity. *You* will still be Ibrahim's secret friend, but Ebu-Beker will be the sultan's grand vizir.

Now then make your choice! either, while it is still

in your power, you must ruin this Ebu-Beker, *your* enemy, and the enemy of those views which you term so great and benevolent; or else you must consent to his elevation and leave to the sultan to proceed further as caprice or accident may direct.—I leave you to determine.—

The Spirit disappeared.—Dreadful was the contest which now arose in the bosom of Amorassan. Should he represent to Ibrahim the dangerous character of Ebu-Beker? Were he to do so, would his representation be believed, coming from the lips of a man whom the sultan knew to be his enemy? Was not the sultan already secretly determined to make him chief cadi? Should he wait in silence for the sultan's orders; or should he surprise the sultan agreeably by proposing, as from himself, that Ebu-Beker might be raised to the desired dignity; and thus should he strengthen his own interest with Ibrahim by affording him an unexpected gratification, at the same time that he bound his rival in chains of gratitude which might possibly withhold him from endeavouring further to poison his master's mind against him?

He dwelt for a few moments on this last idea with satisfaction. His understanding told him that it was the most prudent and craftily imagined; but his heart soon rejected it with contempt, and shame coloured his cheeks at having suffered it to pollute his mind for an instant.

"What!" cried he, starting from the sofa, "would I then purchase the continuance of the sultan's favour at the price of the happiness of his kingdom? shall the administration of the laws in Guzurat depend upon the justice of an Ebu-Beker? Shall I to-day make the first step by a side-path towards the degradation of my character, in order that, when I fall, I may feel that I have deserved my fall, by deserting that straight path which I have so long trodden with steps so firm and with courage

so undaunted! Never! never! I swear it by the Prophet's tomb!"

As Amorassan pronounced these words, a soft ray of light fell upon the picture of his actions in the pavilion of mortal excellence. The spirits remarked it with joy, and their prayers of gratitude mounted to the throne of Allah.

THE CALIPH.

Truly, Ben Hafi, this Amorassan of yours seems to be in such a ticklish situation for a grand-vizir, that, were I in his place, I should be extremely puzzled what to do. But of one thing I am certain; such a man as Amorassan is the very sort of minister that I should like, and it is well for Muzaffer that hitherto I have sought for such a man in vain.

MUZAFFER.

And what then could this Amorassan have done for your service, Commander of the Faithful, which Muzaffer has neglected? Do I not labour day and night to make the monarch's privileges and the people's prosperity go hand in hand?

THE CALIPH.

Why, Muzaffer! hast thou really undertaken a task so difficult? Now may Allah support you in it, poor Muzaffer! for truly it seems to me very like making the tiger and the lamb draw in the same yoke.

MUZAFFER.

Are not your rights enforced? Are not the laws exercised most strictly? Is not implicit obedience to your will inculcated with incessant care? By wholesome severity I have produced among your subjects such a sense of duty, that only command them to spring from a precipice, and you will see them rush towards it. [Here

the caliph's heart swelled with the pride of power, and he rewarded his vizir with a smile of approbation. Muzaffer continued:] Or, say that they should hesitate; there is a sure means of subduing their obstinacy. It is but making parchment of the skins of a dozen ringleaders, and covering your drums with it; I will stake my head, that their comrades will follow to the music of those drums without so much as uttering a whisper.

THE CALIPH.

May Allah forgive me that smile, which polluted my lips even now! By the light of Heaven I swear, vizir, if I thought that such music had ever been heard in Bagdat, I would myself order *one* skin to be made into parchment, that I might stamp on it in golden characters the rights of human nature; that skin should be your own, vizir!

MUZAFFER.

Mighty lord, whence this anger?—I spoke but figuratively.

THE CALIPH.

I hope so; but Allah sees the heart.

BEN HAFI.

To know in how far that speech was figurative, the caliph should ask his subjects. Nay, vizir, frown if thou wilt, and strike me dead with a look if thou canst; still will I assert, and loudly, there is no station on earth more dreadful than a sovereign's throne, whose steps are wet with tears, and whose curtains are shaken by the sighs and groans of his subjects.

THE CALIPH.

I hear not those sighs and groans on mine, Ben Hafi; oh! believe me, I *deserve* not to hear them. I swear, if

I heard them once, that moment would I break in pieces my golden throne, and make myself a coffin from the fragments.—

As he pronounced this solemn declaration, the benevolent monarch's eyes overflowed with tears, and he felt his hand pressed to the lips of Ben Hafi, who had thrown himself on his knees before him. He bade him rise in a tone of affection, and the Hebrew resumed his narrative.

CHAPTER VI.

—"Quel guardo suo a dentro spia
Nel piu secreto lor gli affetti umani."—TASSO.

BEN HAFI.

AMORASSAN'S reflections were interrupted by a summons to attend his father, who had been long unwell, and whose dissolution was thought to be at hand. He found him extended on his couch; near him sat his younger son Zemaun, his countenance overcast, and leaning his head on his hand. On Amorassan's entrance, the old Moawyah raised himself with difficulty, grasped his hand, and thus addressed him.

Moawyah. I sent for you, my beloved son, that I might bestow on you my blessing before we part for ever; I wished also to mention one last request; it is the only one which your father will now make to you on this side the grave.

[Amorassan was deeply affected: his eyes overflowed; he bowed down his head, and sealed a pious kiss upon the hand of his father. The old man understood the answer of the heart: he gazed upon his son with kindness for a few moments, and then resumed his discourse.]

I have ever found in you a dutiful son, and an affectionate friend; and such you remained in a station in

which those names are remembered so rarely! to-day I remind you for the first time (though I know well that you never will forget it) that services rendered by me to the deceased sultan were the sole means of bringing you into an intimate connection with his son, and of making you what you are; the first in all Guzurat for power and happiness. Seeing you such, I should have nothing more to wish, had I not another son, whose claims to a brilliant situation in life are no less urgent upon me now, than your own were formerly. I blame you not for having hitherto delayed to exert your power in his behalf, or in that of any other of the numerous relations of our family: yet I cannot but think it strange, that our house should be the only one of distinction in all Ahmedabad which deserves your favour, and which has not obtained a single mark of it.

Amorassan. My father!

Moawyah. Look, my Amorassan, look upon your brother Zemaun! a man of courage, sense, and active enterprise! he has already shown the foes of Guzurat in battle, that he is worthy of the race from whence he springs, and the vacant government of Burglana is well suited both to his abilities and his claims. All that I request is this, no more; obtain for Zemaun this dignified office, and prove that Amorassan is not more a dutiful son than he is an affectionate brother."

"Amorassan," said Zemaun, while he rose, and advancing towards him clasped his hand; "It is against my will, that our father presses this point upon you. I confess, too, that every one of my own age, and equal claims, whom I saw you raise to dignity and power, made my pride feel humiliated; the thought that you must needs entertain a very mean opinion of my talents and character embittered my heart towards you, and for some time past has made me shun your society. But at the death-bed of our father let all these little animosities be forgotten! Willingly would I wait till the length and

number of my services should force from the caliph and yourself an acknowledgment that they merited a reward: but, since my father wishes to see me established before his eyes close for ever, I am ready to receive this benefit at your hands, and owe it entirely to fraternal affection, rather than to any merit of my own."

Moawyah. Spoken as a brother *should* speak!—Now, then, what answers my Amorassan?

Amorassan. You see me, my father, deeply afflicted by what has just now passed. Was it not your own injunction, that I should not give envy cause to say that I laboured to secure my power by filling every place with my own relations? Did you not charge me to employ, not such as I loved dearest, but such as I esteemed most? Remember, that I am not Guzurat's vizir for my own sake, but for the people's—I can act boldly while the loss of the sultan's favour involves no sacrifice but myself; I can now present my neck to the bow-string without fear in the cause of virtue; but, oh! how much shall I tremble to risk my life, when the loss of mine may draw after it the destruction of those who are connected with me by the bonds of affection and of blood! I feel that my virtue is too weak to support so severe a trial.

Moawyah. It is for your brother, for your only brother, that I plead! Show him some favour, and set your other relations aside.

Amorassan. It is only by adducing my brother as an example, that I have been able to resist the importunities of all the rest.

Moawyah. By which conduct you are become the object of their united hatred.

Amorassan. Which I lament, but which I must endure.

Zemaun. And will still endure, even though it should be increased by that of your brother?

Amorassan. I think too well of my brother to suspect that.

Moawyah. And by your father's displeasure?—You

are silent?—Enough! I would gladly have owed this obligation to you. Since *you* reject my request, I will apply to the sultan: am I to expect your opposition?

Amorassan. I shall perform my duty, but no more.

Moawyah. And who, then, will you tell the sultan, is the fittest person to be governor of Burglana?

Amorassan. Khaled; he to whom Guzurat has been already twice indebted for her preservation; him must I recommend: to decide belongs to the sultan.

Moawyah. Now, then, it is indeed time for me to die!—I have brought into the world a cold-hearted statesman, who is only anxious for the security of his own greatness; but I possess no son in him! he, who affects to have an ear ever open to the prayers of all who suffer, is deaf to the entreaty of his expiring parent! He, who can sympathise with the calamities of the meanest beggar, looks with firmness and indifference on the wound which he inflicts on his own father's heart. Before my eyes, which perhaps behold him for the last time, he scorns and rejects the services of my brave son; of his own excellent brother: of a man whose talents would shine out as brilliantly as his own, were they not kept purposely in obscurity by his envy and unnatural hatred!—Leave me! leave me!—I possess no son in thee!—

Amorassan. Oh! my father, how totally do you mistake my heart! But I have done; be it as you wish! [At this moment he perceived the spirit standing beside him, who warned him not to proceed; but Amorassan heeded not the warning, and continued as follows:] I know well that I ought not to yield; my reason remains unconvinced, but my heart cannot support the bitterness of your reproaches; to-morrow I will demand the government of Burglana for my brother: if evil arises from this appointment Allah grant that it may all fall upon my own head; and if my compliance gives you, my father, one moment of satisfaction, I shall bear that evil without a murmur, however heavy its weight may be.

The old man repaid this promise with a profusion of blessings; but, while his lips overflowed with gratitude, his heart was conscious of nothing more than exultation at having carried his point. Zemaun addressed all his thanks to his father, explicitly declaring, that he considered himself as indebted to him alone for the promise, which he had with so much labour extorted from the unwilling Amorassan. The latter was now dismissed affectionately by Moawyah, and he hastened to collect his scattered thoughts in the most secluded chamber in his palace.

He threw open the door hastily, and the first object which met his eyes was the warning spirit. He started back, and turned away his head in disgust.

Amorassan. And must I then meet that freezing aspect at every turning? Answer me, thou sullen thing! what meant thy presence at my father's?

The Spirit. You were on the point of committing an absurdity; I appeared to warn you against the illusion of your heart; but you heeded me not.

Amorassan. An absurdity! was it one to comply with the last request of an expiring father?

The Spirit. Your father is not expiring; his illness was dissembled, that his entreaties might have the greater effect. The artifice has succeeded; you have been weak enough to give a promise, whose fulfilment will shake the whole happiness of this kingdom to its very foundations: yet to break it will subject your own heart to the most exquisite of human sufferings! Know, that your father's request was dictated by Ebu-Beker, who is engaged in a secret conspiracy with your brother, the object of which is your destruction. And have you then forgotten the nature and principles of the man, to whose government you have promised to commit this important province? Are you not aware, that even in childhood Zemaun's character has displayed nothing but an assemblage of the most hateful passions? His darling

vice was originally ambition, boundless and insatiable; and heedless of the means by which its gratification was procured, as long as he counted upon your assistance, he only envied you: disappointed in that expectation he now bears towards you aversion the most inveterate and deadly. To gratify his ambition is become a secondary object: his first is, to be revenged on you and on the sultan, by whom his services (as he thinks) have been neglected. Vengeance is his daily contemplation, his nightly dream: now, then, make him governor of Burglana, and he will seize the first opportunity of forming an alliance with the sultan of Candeish, Guzurat's most dangerous enemy; he will deliver to him this important frontier-province, and will thereby afford a free passage for his troops into the defenceless country. The land will be deluged with blood, the air will resound with groans and curses; the sultan's throne will totter to its base; and *you* will be the author of all these miseries to Guzurat; *you*, who wilfully committed Burglana to such a brother; *you*, who will also be suspected of participation in your brother's plots and treasons. Now, then, if you dare, perform your promise.

Amorassan. Monster! and if I break it, with it I break my father's heart. The weight of years already presses him down to the grave, and shall I add to the weight the bitterness of disappointment? His own soul seems bent upon the fulfilment of my promise; his life hangs but by a thread; vexation at this breach of faith may snap it! leave me! leave me! Oh! that I had never seen thee!

The Spirit. I confess that, were it not for my warning, you would enjoy to-morrow an hour such as few taste out of paradise. The accomplishment of his hopes would supply the almost exhausted lamp of your father's life for years; when you brought him the wished-for tidings of success, he would bless you with a faltering voice, and with eyes overflowing with gratitude and joy; your

brother would clasp you to his bosom with well-dissembled affection; the sultan would load you with flattery, and express his warm approbation of your choice; and thus would you dream away time, intoxicated with the sweet illusion, till the tempest should break loose, and the demons of vengeance and war cover with misery Guzurat's now happy plains.

Amorassan. It must be done! wretch that I am! I *must* break the heart of my kind, my venerable father.

The Spirit. That is no concern of mine.

Amorassan. Fiend! thou hast nothing of humanity about thee, but the outward form! could thy marble heart feel but one touch of pity——

The Spirit. Pity?—now you speak nonsense, and I leave you—but first know, that Ebu-Beker has prepared the sultan to hear you demand the government of Burglana for your brother: in return for which he means to ask your consent, that Ebu-Beker should fill the place of chief-cadi.—Now then decide as you like best; *how* you decide I care not.—And the spirit vanished.

THE CALIPH.

Methinks, Ben Hafi, this Amorassan of yours does not rightly know what he would have. This disagreeable spirit (though I must confess that she is no great favourite of mine, and think the universe should not induce me to have her continually at my elbow) acts exactly as he desired her; and yet the better she obeys him the more he is out of humour with her. I really think that he is by no means entitled to use such angry language to her, and call her by such harsh names. Not but Amorassan stands high in my favour: for as a vizir he seems to be a very good kind of man; only I am heartily sorry on his account that he ever took it into his head to be a vizir at all. But proceed; I am curious to know how he decided.

MUZAFFER.

I can guess; his place depends on his opposing Ebu-Beker's views, and Ebu-Beker favoured Zemaun's pretensions: Amorassan therefore will counteract them.

BEN HAFI.

Your guess is right; only instead of Amorassan's motive you have named your own. I proceed with my narrative.

CHAPTER VII.

"Now withered murder thus with stealthy pace,
And Tarquin's ravishing strides, tow'rds his design
Moves like a ghost."—*Macbeth.*

EBU-BEKER had succeeded in persuading the sultan that Amorassan took to himself all the credit of the good which was done throughout Guzurat, and that the people only looked upon the monarch as an insignificant tool in the hands of his vizir. The consequence of these impressions was, that Ibrahim received his once-loved friend with the most studied indifference. He affected not to perceive his entrance; he continued to play with a favourite ape; he took care, in conversing with his eunuchs, to let fall sarcastic observations, whose concealed object was to wound the feelings of Amorassan. At length, when he had discharged one of these poisoned arrows so dexterously that he thought it could not fail of hitting the mark, he cast his eyes upon his vizir to enjoy the sight of his vexation. Then did Amorassan answer his look with one so expressive of good will, so free from reproach, so mild, so humble, and yet so open, so dignified, and so firm, that it pierced the sultan to the very heart. His dormant affection was

roused, and his faltering voice betrayed the emotions of his bosom, while he inquired, "And what, then, brings my friend Amorassan hither?"

The well-known tone of affection touched the finest strings of Amorassan's heart: the memory of their long and early friendship filled his eyes with tears. He saw that his evident emotion had communicated itself to Ibrahim; he resolved to seize the fortunate moment, and come to a full explanation respecting Ebu-Beker and his projects. Suddenly the recollection struck him that the spirit had apprised him of the sultan's design to ask that morning the place of chief-cadi for Ebu-Beker, and he suspected that this show of friendship was assumed to win his consent with the less difficulty. Immediately his enthusiasm died away, and he replied coldly and gravely, "that he came to recommend a fit person to fill the government of Burglana."

Ibrahim eyed him for some moments in astonishment; he had marked the sudden glow upon Amorassan's cheek; he saw that tears of affection had gushed into his eyes; and now how came it that all was gone so suddenly? After a pause, he recovered himself, and inquired with equal coldness, "whom Amorassan's judgment favoured?"

He already anticipated the answer, and was prepared to grant the government to Zemaun, requesting in return Ebu-Beker's nomination to the place of chief-cadi; for thus had it been secretly arranged between the sultan and his favourite. What then was his surprise to hear the name of Khaled!

Against this hero no objection could be raised. Mortified, confused, disappointed, Ibrahim stammered out a faint approbation; and with a bleeding heart the vizir regained his home, convinced that he no longer possessed the sultan's confidence, dreading the reproaches of his incensed father, trembling for the welfare of Guzurat, and destitute of all consolation, except the consciousness of having done his duty.

MUZAFFER.

And what he could to preserve his place.

THE CALIPH.

It's a great pity, Muzaffer, that you never can feel otherwise than like a grand vizir! Yet that is not your fault, and we must take men as they are. And what, Ben Hafi, did this unfortunate Amorassan do next? for that he is, and always will be, unfortunate with that freezing spirit of his, I have no longer any sort of doubt. Not that I think the spirit to blame either; she only does her duty; but then, to be sure, she never has any thing to say but what is extremely disagreeable.

BEN HAFI.

After this last interview with Ibrahim, Amorassan began to feel that his own friendship was shaken; he doubted whether this dissembling sultan, this man in secret alliance with his enemy, this luke-warm friend, who had withdrawn his confidence without the slightest ground of reason, merited that he should devote his life so entirely to his service. He forgot that this want of confidence was mutual; that he was himself in secret alliance with a being, of whose virtues he was less persuaded than the sultan was of Ebu-Beker's; and that, when the heart of his friend was warm and open to him, his repulsive coldness had compelled him again to close it.

Absorbed in melancholy reflections, did Amorassan with the break of morning ascend a mountain at no great distance from his country palace. A profusion of cedars, cypresses, and lemon-trees adorned it even to its loftiest summit. At its foot stood a pagoda of great antiquity and of extensive fame, venerable and magnificent. Here lived the light gazelles in tranquil security; many a sweet rivulet sparkling among the cliffs supplied their drink, and they satisfied their hunger with aromatic

herbs; nor had the hunter's step ever been known to frighten into silence the brilliant-feathered choristers of these protected groves.

The air was freshening. A cold and pleasant gale played round the thoughtful brows of the vizir, and bore to him on their soft wings the fragrance of the flowery vales below. The dwellings of men (as yet silent and tranquil as the grave), the blooming meadows and gardens, the mighty rivers, and the gently-flowing brooks, all glowed and glittered, and melted together in a stream of roseate light, which was poured full upon them by the glory of the now rising sun.

A deep silence prevailed above, below, around him; till the songs of birds seemed to bid creation awake, and awake to happiness. Amorassan felt that at least in Guzurat that happiness was bestowed by *him;* he felt that it was the consciousness of his unwearied watchfulness for their good, which enabled these still-slumbering men to slumber on in such security; he fancied that he could hear the mother teach her infant to lisp his name with a blessing, and the old man (recounting to his grand-children the sufferings of his youth) congratulate them, that under the government of Amorassan they had no such sufferings to apprehend.

In this moment he felt that it was only by preserving his connection with its monarch that he could preserve the power of conferring happiness on the kingdom, and he now resolved more firmly than ever to persevere in his benevolent designs; he resolved never to abandon the weak and ungrateful Ibrahim to the mercy of his flatterers; and even (if it were necessary) to sacrifice his life, rather than desert the cause of those millions, whose welfare depended on his resolution.

"Yes!" he exclaimed in virtuous rapture, "the sight of this general content rewards me for all my labours; and, if I must fall a sacrifice for their sake, the blessings of thousands will surely follow me to the scaffold!"

Scarcely were the words uttered, when the oppressive chilness which seized his heart announced that the spirit was near him.

THE CALIPH.

Ah! holy prophet, how it grieves me, that she should come just at such a time; for I am certain beforehand that she comes to say something disagreeable! I should like so much myself to stand on the top of a mountain, overlook my kingdom, and feel exactly as Amorassan felt! Mark me, Muzaffer, I had rather hear you say of yourself that which Amorassan said, than hear myself saluted sole monarch of the universe; always supposing that you could say it with as much truth as Amorassan, which (I am sorely afraid) would not be exactly the case. Now proceed, Ben Hafi.

BEN HAFI.

"Unwearied persecutor!" exclaimed Amorassan, "what brings thee hither just at this moment? It is the first happy one which I have known since I entered into alliance with thee."

The Spirit. Then must it needs be also the weakest and the wildest, and the one in which you delude yourself the most completely; for it is only by delusions that man can make his moments happy.

Amorassan. Then leave me my delusion!

The Spirit. For what, then, was I summoned from my gloomy islands? Was it not to *dispel* thy delusions? Thy petition comes too late, and I must do my duty.

Amorassan. Oh! I was so happy!—the balmy air—the beauty of the rising sun——

The Spirit. Short-sighted mortal! Thou knowest not the breeze which plays round your brows so voluptuously, and cools so kindly the fever of your blood, at this moment loosens in the north a mountain of snow, which overwhelms whole villages; thou dost not think that the sun, in whose warmth you bask and whose

glories you admire, sucks up even now, from fens and marshes, pestiferous vapours to spread disease from province to province, and collects from the aromatic exhalations which flatter your sense so agreeably the elements of lightning, whose shafts shall pass over the villain's head harmless, while they strike the virtuous man to the ground.

Amorassan. And what serves all this to prove? That great benefits are sometimes attended with inferior evils; nothing more. I pretend not to counteract the established order of nature; but all that man can do have I, even I—

The Spirit. Yes! yes! I heard the boast of your fond enthusiasm! You spoke of Guzurat's happiness; of her happiness through you! Vain man! look on yon solitary cottage which the tamarind tree overshadows; there expires the virtuous father of a virtuous family, expires of a broken heart, and his last moments are embittered by the cries of his starving orphans.

THE CALIPH.

Allah be their comfort, and guide them to *me*, that I may clothe and nourish them!

BEN HAFI.

"The author of all this misery," continued the spirit, "the man who, out of spite and vengeance, has brought his whole family from opulence to want; who has broken the father's heart, and has turned out the children to beg their bread through the world; this very man is one of those judges, whose hand has been armed with authority by *you!*"

Amorassan. Name him! name him! and immediate punishment——

The Spirit. And what would it avail to point out one, when thousands are equally guilty? Mortal, I tell thee, could thine ear receive at once all the groans which are uttered by the unfortunate, the persecuted, the oppressed in this Guzurat, which your fond delusion believes so

happy; could I suddenly place before thine eyes, in their whole gigantic deformity, all the cruelty and injustice which is committed in this kingdom in *your* name, the consciousness of your innocence would vanish like a dream, your heart would burst in pieces, and horror and despair would terminate your existence at once, without allowing time for the gush of a tear or the utterance of a groan. Ah! what sovereign could endure the sight of that accumulated guilt and misery which afflicts his kingdom, without his brain being turned with horror!

THE CALIPH.

For pity's sake, Ben Hafi, stop the mouth of that terrible Spirit! While I listen to her my blood runs cold, and I feel my heart pressed together. Allah knows, that for my own part I have always meant to do that which was right; if I have erred, the fault is theirs who deceived me. At the last dreadful day will I advance boldly to the judgment throne with my vizir and my ministers, and say, "To do justice to all was my only wish on earth; but I was a man, and compelled to employ men as my instruments: my agents may have sinned, but my heart is innocent."

The caliph's eyes were raised to heaven, and his hands were folded upon his breast: the little deaf Megnoun believed that his master was at his devotions, and he sank upon his knees, and murmured a prayer softly. The caliph raised him with a smile of benevolence, and resting his head upon his hand, "At that day," said he, "*thou* shalt stand nearest to me, and testify for my heart." He paused for a moment; his countenance became dejected, and he added in a low voice, "There is but one accuser whom I shall fear on that last day, and that one —that one is my own brother."

Ben Hafi fixed his eyes for a moment upon the caliph's face with a look of the deepest emotion: he then looked down, and a tear trickled on his silver beard. His voice faltered, while he thus resumed his narrative.

" The spirit continued."

THE CALIPH.

I am very sorry for it! I wish she would hold her tongue.

BEN HAFI.

Amorassan wished it too, and her voice vibrated to his inmost heart, while she proceeded as follows:—

" Cast thine eyes on the smiling river, which winds among the flowers of yonder meadow, and whose waters sparkle in the sunshine; those waters bear with them into the ocean the corse of a blooming boy, whose nearest relations have secretly murdered him for the sake of his rich inheritance. Ask me not the murderer's name! even should I tell it darkness covers the crime; the accuser would not be believed; the instruments are paid; and he who paid them sits among those into whose hands you have committed the superintendance of the orphans of the land.

" See! see! where yonder hag creeps cautiously among the bushes below, and collects various flowers in her basket. She tramples under foot without regard the wholesome and medicinal herbs, and only gathers those blossoms which conceal poison in their variegated cups. She needs them for a future crime, whose price is already paid, and whose commission you would vainly labour to prevent.

" And, hark! 'twas the trampling of a courser's hoofs. The victim approaches, and the assassin has already taken his secret stand! the bow-string sounds; the poisoned arrow whistles through the air! It transfixes the innocent bosom; he falls, and malignant joy triumphs in the heart of his murderer. He struggles! he dies! Hark, Amorassan! hark! 'twas a hero's dying groan; 'twas the dying groan of *Khaled!*"

Amorassan uttered a cry of horror and surprise; the blood rushed violently back from his heart, and he sank on the ground deprived of animation.

Commander of the Faithful, if you have any wish to see this Amorassan tried by adversity, the moment is near at hand.

THE CALIPH.

Nay, Ben Hafi, make him not unhappy for *my* sake. You know well, that I feel even for those who deserve their misfortunes; how much more then must I pity a man like your Amorassan, especially since he has the misfortune to have such a disagreeable spirit continually at his elbow.

MUZAFFER.

And yet permit me to observe, that this spirit speaks very sensibly; she paints the natural depravity of mankind in very true colours; and thereby she makes known the necessity which there exists for treating them with severity, and the folly of hoping to correct their vices by mild means; which, as your highness may remember, was always my opinion when——

THE CALIPH.

I remember it well, Muzaffer, and I heartily wish that *you* could forget it—say no more about it, but let Ben Hafi proceed.

CHAPTER VIII.

——"Caitiff, shake to pieces,
Who under covert of convenient seeming
Hast practised on man's life—*I* am a man
More sinned against, than sinning."—*King Lear.*

When, on the return of his senses, Amorassan hastened back to the metropolis, he heard in every whisper of the wind the whistling of the poisoned arrow, and every accidental noise sounded like the dying groan of Khaled.

His first care was to send to the warrior's dwell-

ing; the answer was, that he had departed for his country-house that morning. Amorassan's messengers were ordered to follow him, and entreat his instantaneous return. After some hours passed in the most painful anxiety, he saw the chief officer of the police enter his apartment, and heard him announce, that the valiant Khaled was murdered. The vizir clasped his hands in agony at this confirmation of the spirit's veracity; his voice faltered while he inquired the manner of Khaled's death.

"He perished," replied the chief of the police, "by a poisoned arrow; but the assassin has been seized, and is in confinement. His name is Cassim; he has long been openly Khaled's inveterate enemy; and he was found armed with a bow and quiver close to the fatal spot."

The vizir accompanied the chief of the police to the palace: they found Ebu-Beker with the sultan, to whom they explained the melancholy occasion of their coming. "The news had already reached me," answered the sultan, coldly; "I issued even now the necessary orders for the criminal's examination, and shall sit in judgment on him to-morrow myself."

Having said this, Ibrahim turned away, and resumed an uninteresting conversation with Ebu-Beker.

Deeply was Amorassan affected by the evident indifference with which the sultan treated the loss of a man whom he had formerly declared to be the bravest and most faithful defender of his throne, and to the victories of whose sword he and his people had been so often indebted for security.

"The sultan is lost!" said he to himself; "Ebu-Beker has succeeded in making his master's heart like his own."

This reflection added so great a weight to his former vexations, that he was scarcely able to support their burthen, much less to enter into a contest with the arts of his insidious foe. He abandoned the field to Ebu-

Beker, and his trembling limbs with difficulty bore him back to his palace.

Amorassan passed a night of agony. With the dawn of morning he hastened to the divan. The sultan was already on his throne: his princes surrounded him. The vizir saw with surprise, that by the side of Ebu-Beker stood his brother Zemaun, magnificently habited; but that astonishment was considerably increased, when he also beheld his father, whom he had so lately seen on the bed of death, but who now, apparently free from all complaint but old age, stood at no great distance from the throne; while triumph and resentment reigned alternately in his eyes, as he turned them now on Zemaun, and now on Amorassan.

The sultan gave a sign, and Cassim was brought before the assembly. The charge was read; witnesses attested that the accused person had been found at no very great distance from the corse, armed with a bow and arrows; and, the bloody shaft being produced, it was found exactly to resemble those remaining in Cassim's quiver. Cassim was now called upon to make his defence.

"That I was long Khaled's enemy," said he, "it is not my intention to deny: my hatred was open, and its motives were well-known. Hurried away by zeal for the sultan's service, he once did me an act of the most signal injustice. In the hearing of my brothers-in-arms he undeservedly branded me with the name of a coward. Appearance was against me, but appearance only: when I seemed to act from cowardice I in truth effected that object by a feigned retreat, which was not to be attained by the most courageous assault. But Khaled was unjust to me, and I felt the more resentment, because I was the first and the only one to whom Khaled ever was unjust. Loaded with disgrace, I withdrew from the ranks of the brave, and sought a refuge from the finger of scorn in obscurity. Khaled at length discovered his mistake. Often did he sue to be reconciled, but my hatred burned

as fiercely as on the first day of my injury; often did he knock at the door of my hut, but I still drove him away with curses. Yet within these few days he forcibly obtained an entrance, and, standing upon the threshold without heeding my execrations, he addressed me with these words: oh! never shall I forget them.

"'Hate me still, Cassim, but hear me: still reject my friendship, but at least allow me to be just. The sultan has conferred on me the government of Burglana; and, if this accession of rank rejoices me, it is because I am at liberty to bestow on whom I please the station next to me in power and dignity. Thus only can I convince all Guzurat how unjustly I have treated you, and that Khaled is not more liable to commit an injustice, than anxious to repair it.'

"My hatred was unable to resist his mild tone and submissive looks. He extended his hand to me; I sank upon his bosom, and those who had so long been enemies, parted friends. When he left me, he appointed a day and hour for my meeting him at his country-house, and finally arranging the business of Burglana. With a light heart and alone I set forward for the habitation of my new-made friend; I was already near it, when I heard the cry of murder; and, before I had time to recollect myself, I was seized, informed of Khaled's death, and accused of being the assassin. I have no more to say; but what I have said is the truth."

He was silent. Proofs of what he had just advanced were demanded; but as he had nothing to bring forward but his bare assertion, and as he acknowledged the bloody arrow to be his property, no one entertained the least doubt of his guilt! Accordingly sentence of death was passed upon him, and he was ordered for immediate execution.

This act of justice being done, and while the guards were removing Cassim, the sultan proceeded to declare Zemaun governor of Burglana. Amorassan started;

he remembered the spirit's dreadful prophecy respecting his brother; that spirit, whose prophecies the event had always so fatally confirmed. He shuddered—he turned pale—he hesitated, but it was only for a moment. The strength of his innate virtue overpowered all other sentiments, and he resolved to risk and to endure everything, rather than by preserving a guilty neutrality tacitly to consent to the devastation of Guzurat, and the downfal of its monarch and his friend. Impressed with this idea he stepped forward; and his lips were already unclosed to remonstrate against his brother's elevation, when he suddenly perceived on every countenance (the sultan himself not excepted) marks of the most profound consternation and alarm! All were pale, trembling, agitated, looking as if they had been struck by the wand of some supernatural power. Every eye was rivetted upon a single point: Amorassan turned towards it, and, lo! there stood the spirit, with her spotless robes, her chilling looks, her calm and serious countenance, holding a bow of ebony, already bent and provided with an arrow.

The sound of her flowing garments, as she glided majestically along, was like the rushing of a tempest. With a firm air, motionless eyes, and a countenance terrible in its beauty; calm, dignified, and awful, stood the spirit before the sultan's throne, and directed her arrow right against his bosom; yet was there no one among his numerous guards and courtiers who dared utter a word, or move a finger, or advance a step, to rescue their astonished lord from the danger of that well-aimed arrow.

The spirit spoke; and loud, and slow, and solemn as thunder when it rolls among distant mountains, fell her words on the hearts of the petrified spectators.

"Listen, ye sons of the dust, whose eyes are ever dazzled by appearance, by presumption, by deceit! I, the avenger of eternal justice, am come hither, armed with the never-failing bow of truth, to punish the

offender, to absolve the guiltless, and to prevent the crime of shedding innocent blood. This warrior has told you true! The arrow which was produced by that subborned witness, was stolen from Cassim, substituted for the true one, and artfully stained with blood, for the purpose of misleading justice, and removing suspicion from the real murderer. That poisoned shaft, which was in truth the cause of Khaled's death, at this moment stretches the cord of my never-erring bow! Mark me now! let the innocent rest secure, and let only the assassin tremble, while I turn myself first right, then left, till I shall have made the round of this whole assembly, not even excepting the sultan himself; but no sooner shall my arrow point against the bosom of the assassin than, untouched by me, the fatal bowstring shall sound, and the poisoned barb which pierced the heart of Khaled, shall stand quivering in the murderer's own."

She was silent; and now, while her eyes seemed to read the very heart, she moved her bow slowly round, till it had traversed the left half of the circle. Every one shuddered when he saw the shaft directed against his bosom; yet every one kept his posture, though with difficulty and with trembling knees. The spirit now turned to the right, moving her bow in the same manner. Suddenly the string was heard to sound, and, though the expected arrow had not flown, Zemaun was beheld extended on the marble pavement.

"Deluded monarch!" said the spirit, "look down, and witness the force of conscience; Khaled's murderer lies at your feet!"

The veil was now suddenly removed from the eyes of all present; and Amorassan's heart was torn by agony scarcely to be endured. His old father lay senseless on the carpet before the sultan's throne; while Zemaun, suddenly starting from the ground, raised his clasped hands to heaven, and exclaimed in a tone of desperation—"Accursed be my brother, my perjured brother! Eternal

curses upon his inveterate enmity, upon his broken promise! I committed the bloody deed to obtain that by violence which the sultan was willing to grant me, but of which I was debarred through my brother's envy! Had the monarch's grace towards me been suffered to take its free course, Khaled would still be living, and I should still be innocent! 'Tis my brother who stained these hands with blood; 'tis my brother who in fact is Khaled's murderer!"

The spirit addressed Amorassan.

"Now, then," said she, "let me see whether your virtue can support this trial; let me see whether you will deliver up to the vengeance of violated laws that criminal in whose veins the same blood circulates which fills your own, and whose guilt you will share if you exert your power to shelter him from punishment. Farewell!"

She said, and disappeared. The sultan, with a faltering voice, ordered the guards to release Cassim and conduct Zemaun to prison, and then hastened from the divan bewildered and stupified with terror and amazement.

And now were the ears of Amorassan deafened with the curses and lamentations of his grey-headed father, whose senses were at length restored, and who was vainly endeavouring to break the chains with which Zemaun was already loaded. Amorassan fell at his father's feet, and would have clasped his knees; but the desperate old man repulsed him with fury, and spurned him with his foot. Tears and blood at once bedewed the face of Amorassan; but he wiped them away, and, bending himself still lower, kissed in submissive duty the foot which had spurned him with such harshness.

His submission was in vain. Dreadful was the curse which fell from the lips of the frantic father. But at the same moment a blaze of light flashed through the pavilion of mortal excellence, and illuminated the picture of Amorassan's actions.

That spirit, which is superior to fate, awoke in his bosom; the spirit of conscious virtue suffering undeservedly. He rose from the earth, and thus addressed Moawyah calmly, modestly, but firmly:—

"I reproach you not, my father, that your foot spurned me; had the blow even deprived me of life, in the moment of my soul's departure I would have blessed you still! Here I stand, odious to you, censured by all, and with nothing to plead for me except the voice of my own conscience, which cannot reach the ear of man. Oh! surely could you hear that voice, you would pity your son, and think on your rash curses with regret. Your foot has spurned me; true, it was the foot of a father, but a father is still but a man; though *you* reject me, Allah will not. All here condemn me, but I retire acquitted by my own heart. This is enough for me; the rest I commit to heaven!"

He bowed his head to his father, and, casting upon him a look of mingled pity and affection, he quitted the divan. He was summoned to the sultan, whom he found still oppressed by the recollection of the strange and awful scene which he had just witnessed. Ebu-Beker was present; he had already heard his master pronounce his determination to inflict on Zemaun the utmost rigour of the law, and had not dared to interpose a word in mitigation of his friend's death-warrant. Ibrahim received his vizir with open arms, and a countenance which expressed the greatest tenderness and compassion.

"Unfortunate!" said he; "how hard a fate is thine! Yet let it be some comfort to you, Amorassan, that Ibrahim understands your merits, and shares your sufferings. Still continue true to yourself, and I swear by Allah that I will ever continue true to you."

Amorassan pressed his burning lips upon the hand of the monarch.

"My sovereign and my friend!" he said with difficulty; "I come before you bowed to the ground with

my father's curse. All censure, all abhor me; for your sake and for your people's I am become the object of general detestation; if I possess not *your* approbation, then am I a wretch indeed."

The sultan replied by embracing him with emotion, and Amorassan quitted the seraglio with a bleeding heart.

THE CALIPH.

Trust me, Ben Hafi, I am heartily rejoiced that this poor weak sultan escaped the misfortune of punishing the innocent instead of the guilty; and, in consideration of this worthy action, I am willing to be on good terms with your cold uncomfortable spirit; who, after all, may be a very good sort of creature, though it so happens that she never has any thing to tell but what is unpleasant to hear. However, I confess she is obliged to tell the truth; and if that truth happens to be painful, to be sure, (poor thing!) that is no fault of hers.

CHAPTER IX.

"Have I then no tears for thee, my father?
Can I forget thy cares from helpless years,
Thy tenderness for me?—Shall I for these
Repay thy stooping venerable age
With shame, disquiet, anguish, and dishonour?"

THOMSON.

BEN HAFI.

HEAVY was the burthen which now oppressed Amorassan's heart. He saw his brother loaded with chains, and condemned to die the death of a murderer; he saw his father tearing his grey locks in despair, expiring on the bloody scaffold of one of his sons, while his last words were curses upon the other. He heard the unjust accusation of all Guzurat, "Thou art the sole cause of thy family's ruin and disgrace, and hast richly earned

the execration of thy father!" And he now looked with horror on his connexion with the mysterious being, whose counsels had governed his proceedings, and whose fatal prophecy had compelled him to oppose his brother's exaltation.

Yet on further reflection he could not deny, that the sultan had been on the very point of shedding innocent blood, and had only been prevented by the interposition of the spirit. He felt also, that Khaled's murder had confirmed the character given of his brother by his mysterious counsellor; and that this one action was sufficient to prove that, by fulfilling his duty and opposing Zemaun's appointment, he had himself preserved his native land from being made the theatre of crimes still more atrocious. This idea gained additional strength, when he remembered that Zemaun had listened without compunction to a sentence of death pronounced upon an innocent person—a sentence which ought to have fallen upon his own head; and that he had dared to return the sultan thanks for his new dignity in the presence of that very man whom he was on the point of sending to the scaffold—conduct which marked so hardened a heart, that the thought of it extinguished even brotherly compassion, and told Amorassan, that to lament the fate of such a moral monster was weakness not to be excused.

In spite, therefore, of the general disapprobation, of his father's hatred, of the reproaches of his other relations, of the forced politeness or avowed hostility of the courtiers, of Ebu-Beker's increasing influence, and of the sultan's increasing coldness; in spite of all these, still would Amorassan have persevered in the course which he had chosen, and have sacrificed all other considerations to those of justice and virtue, had not his father unexpectedly summoned him to his presence. The shock of the late dreadful transactions, and the approach of the day appointed for Zemaun's execution, had now really reduced Moawyah to that dangerous situation which (in order to carry

his point with Amorassan with the more facility) he had formerly dissembled. Amorassan found him evidently on the brink of the grave. The cold dews of death already stood on the old man's brows, as he with difficulty beckoned to his son to advance, then grasped his hand, and pressed it against his clay-cold lips.

"Amorassan!" he said, in a voice whose murmurs were scarcely audible; "your brother—oh, save him! suffer him not to die the ignominious death of a criminal, and I will forgive all the misfortunes which your conduct has drawn down upon him and me. Let me not sink under the burthen of that dreadful thought—'my son perished as a murderer, because his brother hated him,' and I will recal my curse, and my last words shall be, 'Blessings on my son Amorassan!' Oh, hasten, hasten! I feel that my heart-strings are breaking, and will scarcely last so long as thy return."

On his entrance Amorassan had prepared himself for curses and reproaches; but much more powerful than all curses and reproaches were the gentle words of his imploring dying father; the pale countenance, animated alone by his only wish, by his final hope; the faint pressure of the chilled hands; the eyes already glazed by dissolution; these decided Amorassan's fate for ever. Guzurat's welfare, duty, friendship, justice, virtue, every thing disappeared in that moment. He kissed his father's cold hand, bathed it with tears, and hastened to sacrifice all the fruits of his past labours, all his plans for the present, and all his hopes for the future; forgetting the rules which he had formerly laid down for his own conduct, and to which he had hitherto so strictly adhered; and remembering nothing except his anxiety to smooth the death-bed of his father.

It was already night; he hastened towards the royal prison, into which a secret entrance was known to him. As he hurried along he felt his cheeks chilled by the breath of the warning spirit.

"Deluded man!" whispered the voice, "what are you about to do? You are going to sacrifice your magnanimous designs, to exalt Ebu-Beker, to destroy the fabric of your own power, to snatch a murderer from the punishment due to his offences, and to turn him loose upon society, in order that he may commit still greater crimes!"

Yet still Amorassan hastened onward; at the door of the prison he again heard the spirit's murmur.

"Madman that thou art! to spare a few moments of pain to an old man, who at all events will be an insensible corse to-morrow, wilt thou forget thy duty? and art thou the man who was to be deaf to every voice but those of justice and of truth?"

"Ah! that old man is my father," sighed Amorassan.

The Spirit. Oh, partial minister! oh, violator of the laws of justice! because he is thy father's son, shall the murderer then escape unpunished?

Amorassan. No, no! The consciousness of his crime will pursue him; that will be punishment enough.

The Spirit. To Zemaun that will be none. I tell thee his heart is hardened: release him, and, under Ebu-Beker's secret protection, he will commit all those crimes, and bring all those misfortunes on Guzurat, which you have already heard explained by my prophetic warning.

Amorassan hesitated for a moment; but the last words and looks of his expiring father were still present to him, and the feelings of his heart overpowered the voice of prudence and of justice. He rushed into the prison.

"Now then," whispered the spirit, "now then learn from bitter experience what you gain when you follow your own inclinations, and not my warning."

At that moment Amorassan heard a violent uproar, which seemed to be at no great distance. It came nearer. Numerous torches were seen hurrying along in various directions. The guards, in traversing the interior court of the prison, (in which the vizir was then standing,) surrounded him, exclaiming, "that they had at least

found an accomplice;" and, without listening to his remonstrances, they dragged him into the presence of the governor of the prison. That officer appeared to be in the greatest confusion when he recognized the grand vizir, and immediately rescued him from the hands of the tumultuous soldiery. He then informed Amorassan that all this disorder had been occasioned by the escape of his brother Zemaun, which had but that moment been discovered, and the manner and means of which were still a secret.

Equally surprised and rejoiced at this intelligence, Amorassan returned to his father without loss of time.

"Your wishes are gratified!" he exclaimed; "before I could reach the prison Zemaun had found means to escape from it, and has saved himself from punishment by flight!"

Moawyah raised his clasped hands in gratitude to heaven, and the last spark of joy illuminated his faded eye. He bade Amorassan approach, that he might remove the curse from his head, and give him his dying blessing. It was in vain that Amorassan repeated the assurance, that Zemaun had fled without his assistance. The old man was persuaded that no power inferior to the vizir's could have unclosed the gates of the well-guarded fortress, and was convinced that modesty or prudence made his son deny that he had dared to violate the sultan's orders. He blessed him with fervency; but, while the old man's hands rested upon his head, Amorassan shuddered to think that his father spoke in the belief, that for his sake the laws had been violated, and a murderer enfranchised to commit more crimes; and, while this thought tormented him, he felt that *such* a blessing could never find audience in heaven.

Moawyah now sank into a sweet and tranquil slumber. Amorassan was still watching by his father's bed-side, when he was summoned to attend the sultan. He obeyed. The saloon in which Ibrahim was seated was thronged

with courtiers, and among them were Ebu-Beker and the governor of the royal prison.

"I have been just informed," began the sultan sternly, "of your brother's escape. Far let the murderer fly, and wander round the world like a perturbed spirit, till remorse brings him to an untimely grave! His flight matters to me but little; but that you, vizir, should have so far forgotten your duty, as to violate those laws whose asserter you ought to be, through compassion for a brother whom your affectation of over-justice compelled to become a culprit, this both surprises and affects me to the very soul: neither regard to my people nor to myself can permit so gross a violation of justice to pass with impunity. The law decrees that he who procures the escape of a criminal should himself suffer the penalty of the crime. The memory of our early friendship, and that affection which (I own with shame) I cannot help still feeling for you, will not suffer that law to exercise its whole rigour; yet punishment of some kind ought to be inflicted. Retire from my presence; you will soon know your fate, and till then Zemaun's forsaken dungeon must be your abode."

Amorassan. Amazement! Mighty Ibrahim, you condemn the innocent unheard! I swear by the prophet, that I had no share in the escape of my wretched brother.

Sultan. How? Have you the assurance to deny what is in itself so evident? Were you not found within the prison at dead of night? Had you not entered it by a passage known only to yourself and to me? What other individual in this whole kingdom could have penetrated unseen into that iron fortress and carried off a captive, guarded by such innumerable bolts, and bars, and walls, and soldiers?

Amorassan. Appearances are against me, but appearances deceive.

Sultan. What then could be your business in the prison at an hour so unseasonable?

Amorassan. I came to do that, of which I am now accused—but the business was effected before my arrival.

Sultan. So then! it seems this virtue is not always so immaculate as its master would willingly have Guzurat believe it: this inflexible justice can yield occasionally, when it suits with its own private views and passions! You confess the intention, and in what does the intention differ from the fact? And how can Amorassan himself justify his conduct even on his own grounds? Yet more; how are we to be certain of the truth of an assertion, which appears so strange? It will be sufficient to believe you innocent of your brother's escape, having such strong reasons to believe you guilty, when you can make known to us the real criminal—till then, farewell; guards, lead him to prison.

At this moment Amorassan heard the spirit whisper—"Draw forth the paper, which is concealed between the foldings of your girdle on the left side, and desire that it may be read in open court: it contains the name of Zemaun's deliverer."

Amorassan found the paper and delivered it into the hands of the person who stood next to him. The sultan gave orders for its being read aloud. What was the astonishment of all present when they found it to be an order to the governor of the prison for permitting Zemaun's escape, written with the sultan's own hand, and sealed with his private signet! It also commanded the governor to keep this order secret, on pain of death.

As he listened, a deadly paleness spread itself over Ibrahim's face: in a moment after it gave place to the burning blush of convicted falsehood, and tears of mortified pride gushed into his eyes. The perusal was ended, and an universal silence succeeded. It was broken by the sultan's starting from his throne, and seizing the important scroll. He cast a fugitive glance upon it, and, having ascertained that it was the original order, he asked in a terrible voice, while shame and fury struggled

for empire in his countenance,—"Vizir, how came you by this paper?"

Amorassan answered with humility—"It has proved my innocence, and more needs not to be said. Mighty sultan, permit me to retire, to close the eyes of my dying father, and commit his ashes to the tomb."

The sultan bowed his head in silence, and Amorassan withdrew.

THE CALIPH.

Let me not live, Ben Hafi, if this was not a most scurvy trick of your sultan! and had he really charged his friend with that as a crime, of which he was himself the author?

BEN HAFI.

He had indeed; such was the consequence of his intimacy with Ebu-Beker. That insidious councillor had gradually taught the sultan to consider Amorassan as the original cause of Zemaun's offence. He lamented over the vizir's too strict adherence to justice, which had involved his brother in blood; had brought down upon himself the curses of his father; had made him be looked upon by all Guzurat as a man who sacrificed the ties of nature to the gratifications of envy and ambition; and had even induced the people to censure the sultan himself for intrusting his power to a minister so odious. He then expatiated upon Zemaun's military talents, his youth, his misfortunes, and the services of his father; and the sultan was persuaded to authorise Zemaun's escape from prison and from punishment.

He fled; and now came the news that Amorassan had been found within the precincts of the royal prison. Ebu-Beker immediately turned this circumstance to his own advantage. He told the sultan that, by laying the blame upon the vizir's compassion for his brother, the public indignation at his former inflexibility would be abated: he reminded him that, had it not been for

Amorassan's pretensions to immaculate virtue, Zemaun would still have been innocent, Khaled would still have been alive! and he assured him that, if he could but humble the vizir's pride a little by convicting him of a supposed fault, he would make him more indulgent to the feelings of human nature for the future, and thu would render him a most essential service. Ibrahim was easily convinced by these arguments, or at least fancied that he was convinced by them: the real motive, which (unknown to himself) made him consent to this accusation, was a secret inclination to mortify that faultless excellence, which soared to a pitch so far above the flight of all others, and to bring it down a little nearer to his own level.

But now, when he found the tables turned upon him, and that he stood convicted of a most gross and wilful falsehood in the face of his whole court, his vexation was without bounds; and Amorassan's triumph over him was a much more atrocious crime in his eyes, than that transgression would have been of which he had so wrongfully accused him.

Envy, spite, rage, jealousy, all took possession of the sultan's heart at once; to be revenged he was determined; and he now resolved to take that step respecting which he had so long hesitated, for the sole and express purpose of mortifying Amorassan, and acting contrary to his advice and inclination.

Accordingly, he the next day announced that Ebu-Beker would henceforth execute the functions of chief-cadi.

CHAPTER X.

"Our common studies, in our breasts one mind,
Our lives from youth by choice and habit joined,
These fragile bonds now sink in swift decay:
Far bear the winds each long-loved hope away!"—
GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

AMORASSAN was sorrowing by the side of his father's tomb, when the news of his enemy's advancement reached him: it grieved him more for the sultan's sake than for his own, and for Guzurat's more than for the sultan's; for Ibrahim's perfidious and spiteful conduct respecting his brother's escape had wounded his heart too deeply to permit the existence of their former friendship in all its original warmth and purity.

He now stood alone in the world, at once oppressed with the weight of his brother's infamy, his father's death, the loss of the sultan's confidence, Ebu-Beker's enmity, and the universal hatred: for the people were persuaded, that he had driven his brother to perdition and had broken his father's heart; and they could not easily believe, that the man who dealt so hardly by his nearest relations could possibly mean kindly by them.

But to obtain their gratitude was not Amorassan's object, and willingly would he have passed his whole life in heaping blessings on those who loaded him with curses: but, alas! his activity was palsied, and doubt bewildered all his thoughts. Every plan which his genius inspired, every wish which his heart formed, immediately faded away before the chilling breath of his persecutor, who forced him to remark all the dangers and difficulties, and all the disadvantageous consequences which must necessarily accompany the execution. If Amorassan stretched out his hand to do a benevolent action, the warning spirit made it drop again inactive, by coldly pointing

out the worthlessness of the person, or the defects in his project for relieving him. If he prepared to give his opinion in the Divan, the Spirit never failed to place before him the opposite side of the question; and as mortals can give no advice to which there are not some objections, and take no important step without the benefits being necessarily accompanied by some disadvantages, he felt doubtful of the propriety of giving such an opinion, and the advice expired upon his lips, unsaid.

On the other hand Ebu-Beker's activity seemed indefatigable—he lost no time in hesitating; he resolved, and the thing was done at once. As his actions were adapted to the momentary occasion, they in general were attended with success; but if his projects failed, what mattered it to him? His only care was to conceal his failure from the sultan; who, on the other hand, found the business of government greatly alleviated by the despatch of his new minister, and began to consider Amorassan as a well-meaning man, but totally without talents for business, and unfit for the station of grand-vizir.

Such was the state of things, when one evening, as Amorassan sat by his father's tomb, absorbed in deep but not unpleasing melancholy, the warning spirit suddenly appeared before him.

"Tremble as thou may'st," said the persecutor, "frown if thou wilt, but thou must hear me; for necessity, thy master and mine, compels *me* to speak, and *thee* to listen. This morning did Ebu-Beker sit in judgment for the last time upon Sanballad, the governor of the royal prison, from whom, for your sake, I secretly withdrew the sultan's order for your brother's flight. This man has been accused of delivering that order into your hands, which he was commanded to keep secret on pain of death. His sentence is already pronounced, for he can produce no proofs of his innocence. In his mortal agony he appeals to you; he implores you to divulge the means by

which you obtained that paper: his life and death are both in your power; what will you do?"

Amorassan. Can you doubt it? Fly to the sultan, declare that that paper was given me by you.

The Spirit. By me! a supernatural being! and thereby show yourself to the sultan as a practiser of forbidden arts, as a sorcerer, as an ally of Eblis.

Amorassan. Let him think me so! better that the sultan, nay, that all Guzurat, should shun and abhor me, than that this innocent man should perish on my account.

The Spirit. Do this and you are vizir no moment longer—act as you will, but forget not that I warned you of the consequences.

Amorassan. Oh! that I had never heard, had never heeded, thy warnings!

The Spirit. I own you would have been happier; yet blame not me. It was not my fault that you aimed at uniting what was in their nature incompatible—the warm enthusiasm which animates men to noble deeds, and that cold prudence which foresees and reckons all their various consequences.

Amorassan. I am at length undeceived, dreadfully undeceived. Be satisfied with what I have already suffered; warn me no more, leave me and for ever.

The Spirit. Whether I stay with you, or whether I leave you, to me matters nothing, but you have bound my destiny to yours: till your fate shall be unravelled I must pursue you still.

Amorassan. And when then will my fate be decided?

The Spirit. I was not permitted to read the last leaf. Oh! were I able to show you *this* also, wretched man, what would there be left for you to hope! Hark! a messenger enters your palace to summon you to the sultan. What mean you to do?

Amorassan. To declare all to the sultan, appeal to his former friendship, to the memory of our happy hours of youth, to his *heart!*

The Spirit. Do it; and become the object of universal fear and horror, as much as you are now an example of misery and mischance. Now then, I leave the *vizir* for ever; but *Amorassan* must not hope to escape me!

The Spirit disappeared, and the messenger entered; Amorassan followed him to the seraglio.

"Mighty Ibrahim!" he exclaimed, while he threw himself at the sultan's feet, and clasped his knees, "if ever I possessed a place in your heart, if ever you thought me worthy of your confidence, be moved by my entreaties, give credit to the oath which I now take! May the lightnings of heaven strike me dead before your eyes, if Sanballad be not innocent of the fault laid to his charge! he did not give me that fatal paper; he knows not by what means I procured it."

Ibrahim. And what then were those means?

Amorassan. Be gracious, and suffer me to remain silent. To explain this mysterious circumstance could produce no advantage, and might occasion much distress.

Ibrahim. It is enough! continue obstinate, I will remain so too; preserve your mysterious secret, as I will my resolution. If Sanballad is really guiltless, it rests with you to prove his innocence; if you remain silent, he dies, and his blood be upon *your* head, not mine; now save him, or condemn him, for both depend upon you.

Amorassan. Oh! Ibrahim! and does then the memory of our long union entitle me to no more confidence from my friend?

Ibrahim. And can you still pretend to my confidence? Amorassan, do I possess yours? Your late mysterious behaviour, the coldness with which you received my caresses, the care with which you kept your heart closed against me, were these likely to preserve my confidence? And dares the man, who has treated me thus so long, still call himself my friend? Amorassan, you are no longer the man whom I once loved so heartily! no longer,

did I say? Oh! you never were the man whom I believed you to be, the man who merited my affections so well.

Amorassan. I was that man, I am that man still; and, if ever I deserved your friendship then, a thousand times more do I deserve it at this moment, the most painful one of my whole life.

Ibrahim. Prove it then by saving the life of the accused Sanballad; for if you persevere in this obstinate silence, innocent or guilty, Sanballad dies!

Amorassan. Ibrahim! I entreat!—I conjure—

Ibrahim. I have said it! he dies! by Allah, he dies at sunrise.

Amorassan. Fate, thou hast conquered, and I bow beneath thy power. Now mark me, Ibrahim!

Words cannot paint the sultan's surprise and anxiety, while he listened to Amorassan's account of the Egyptian sorcerer; but no sooner was the appearance of the spirit described, than he uttered an exclamation of alarm and horror, and drew back some paces from Amorassan.

"Answer me;" he cried, "that dreadful being, who stood before my throne armed with the bow and arrow, and who discovered the concealed murderer—was not this thy spirit!"

Amorassan. It was the same!

Ibrahim. Amorassan! and could you then enter into this dangerous league, unknown to me? and could you then live with me in the strictest intimacy so long, and still retain by your side a being whose very recollection makes my blood run cold! You shut your own heart against me; you employed the most unwarrantable means to become master of the secrets of mine; and yet you still called me your friend!

Amorassan. It was for your sake—for the sake of your kingdom——

Ibrahim. Away with these pretences; they cannot impose upon me any longer! Your own incapability of friendship made you doubt the stability of mine; ambi-

tion made you tremble for your station, and you scrupled not to employ infernal arts to preserve it. You dared not to confide in me, in human nature, nay not even in yourself; and who then will dare to confide in *you*? Who will endure the presence of one, by whose side an invisible ally ever stands to enable him to dissect the hearts of others, and teach him to conceal the real emotions of his own? You have broken all the bonds of society; you stand no more on the same level with other men; you act no longer from the motives from which other men act. It is this chilling, dreadful being, who has forced our hearts asunder; you have preferred her friendship to mine, and now enjoy the fruits of your supernatural alliance! Hence from my sight! never let me see you more!

With every appearance of abhorrence and disgust, the sultan hastened out of the saloon. Amorassan returned home, commanded his slaves to load the camels with his treasures, and before break of day Ahmedabad was left far behind him.

THE CALIPH.

To tell you the truth, Ben Hafi, though this poor deceived sultan is no particular favourite of mine, on the present occasion I cannot greatly blame him. In Ibrahim's place I should have done the very same thing; and in spite of Amorassan's merits I should rather have parted with him than have kept such a disagreeable spirit continually about me—though after all I think that Ebu-Beker was a much more dangerous companion for the sultan than the spirit would have been.

MUZAFFER.

Permit me to observe, Commander of the Faithful, that so far was this spirit from being dangerous, that she would have been a most inestimable ally to a minister who knew how to make a proper use of her. Why did not Amorassan follow her advice, and exert himself to

ruin Ebu-Beker before he had time to obtain the sultan's confidence, and estrange his heart from his vizir?

BEN HAFI.

Because Amorassan did not resemble Muzaffer!

THE CALIPH.

Nay, that is certain, Ben Hafi; I really think I never knew two people more unlike. But what became of Amorassan after he left Ahmedabad?

CHAPTER XI.

—"Away!—the foul fiend follows me."—*King Lear.*

BEN HAFI.

AMORASSAN wandered onwards, followed by his slaves and loaded camels. Where he laid his weary head, was now a matter of indifference to him; yet, recollecting a dear and faithful friend, who inhabited a distant province, he resolved to direct his steps thither, and shelter his misfortunes under his hospitable roof.

He found there what he sought, grateful hearts, a kind reception, compassion and repose. Here then he resolved to pass the remainder of his life in tranquil obscurity; but scarcely had three days elapsed when in the twilight his persecuting spirit stood before him.

"Away, Amorassan!" she exclaimed; "call your slaves; let your camels be loaded; you must be gone this very night. The grand-vizir, Ebu-Beker—ha! at those words how the colour fades from your cheek!—The grand-vizir, Ebu-Beker, has been entrusted by his sovereign with your secret; he has not failed to employ it to effect your complete destruction. He has convinced the sultan, that you are a necromancer; that his former affection for you was produced by spells and talismans; and that all the misfortunes with which his kingdom has

been visited, were the consequence of your alliance with the infernal powers. Ibrahim has abandoned you to the vizir's malignity; the guards are now hastening hither, and if you are found you will perish as a sorcerer by a fiery death.

Amorassan. And let me perish then! life is become hateful to me, and I will not wander further to preserve it.

The Spirit. Thou must not perish, and thou shalt wander further.

Amorassan. What can compel me?

The Spirit. That, which you summoned me from the islands of gloom to counteract! your heart!—mark me—your host will never consent to surrender you to the sultan's guards. He will either perish in defending you, or be compelled to share your flight, and tear himself from all that is dear to him. He has a wife—children—friends—Ebu-Beker's vengeance will fall heavy upon them; his possessions will be confiscated; his family will perish in misery; your friend will never cease to lament their loss, and will sink into the grave broken-hearted. Your flight can alone rescue him from these misfortunes; now then, Amorassan, remain here if your heart will let you.

"Away! away!" cried the unfortunate to his slaves, and in a few hours they were once more upon their journey.

It was evident that in Guzurat there was no safety for Amorassan. He resolved to take shelter in the neighbouring kingdom of Candeish. His road lay through Burglana, and he was already within a day's journey of the frontiers, when he perceived a small troop of travellers, who, attacked by robbers far superior in number, still defended themselves with the greatest bravery.

"Oh! Allah!" he exclaimed, "that I might but lose my own wretched life in preserving that of a fellow-creature!"

He commanded his attendants to unsheathe their sabres and follow him. He gave his Arabian steed the spur, and darting down the hill, from whose brow he had descried the combatants, was on the point of joining them,

when—"Right! right!" he heard the spirit whisper; "haston onwards! lose no time; save the villain's life, that he may become still more a villain and then own the truth of my prediction! The man who fights yonder is your brother Zemaun, is Zemaun the murderer!"

"May he become my murderer too!" replied the desperate Amorassan; "thus at least I shall be freed from thy persecutions!"

He urged his courser forwards with increased speed, fell upon the robbers and decided the combat. Part of them fled; the rest were bound. Amorassan now advanced towards his brother, and extended his hand; but no sooner did Zemaun recognise him, than with frantic gestures and dreadful execrations he forbade his approach, at the same time threatening him with his unsheathed sabre. In vain did Amorassan attempt to appease him; Zemaun's rage increased with every moment. At length Amorassan divided his well-laden camels into two parts, left the richest share with his brother, and then with a heavy heart resumed his journey.

But scarcely had Zemaun lost sight of him, when the thirst of vengeance, and desire to possess his brother's remaining treasures, took possession of his bosom. He imparted his plans to his companions, and procured their assistance; he offered to set free the captive banditti, provided they would elect him for their chief. His proposals were accepted; he set forward with his new associates, easily overtook Amorassan in the desert, plundered the little caravan, and thus became the captain of a band of robbers, as the warning spirit had foretold.

"Rich in virtue," he exclaimed to the bewildered Amorassan, "you need no other possessions. Your virtue has made me a fugitive, an outcast, a robber; now let us see what it will make of *you*. I now behold you such as I was myself on that day when I was compelled to preserve my life by flight; but fortune smiles on me once more; and, by the help of my good sword and these my brave companions, I doubt not soon to regain by

plunder more than I have lost through my brother's spite and envy. I leave you life, not from any sense of kindness, but because I trust that an existence so miserable will punish you with every moment for the sufferings which you have inflicted upon me."

Amorassan sank upon the earth, and without speaking enveloped his head in his garment.

The sun soon poured his blazing fire over these unbounded deserts, where the eye was not gratified by the sight of a single bush, no, not of a single blade of grass? The robbers were gone, and had carried off his slaves, his camels, and his treasures. Amorassan was left alone. He wandered onward, while the burning sand scorched the soles of his feet, and while the only moisture which dewed the earth beneath was the tears which fell from Amorassan's smarting eye-lids. And now a thick gloom overspread the heavens. The whirlwind was roused; columns of sand rose into the air, and the waste beneath seemed agitated like the ocean. The thunder rolled heavily over Amorassan's head, and no cave was nigh to afford him shelter! The whirlwind enveloped him; it raised him from the ground, and then dashed him down again with violence. He struggled, with every effort sank deeper, and was conscious that he was only struggling to dig his own grave in the sand. He resigned himself to his fate, and soon lost all recollection.

THE CALIPH.

My good Ben Hafi, if you make this unhappy man suffer much longer, I shall never be able to hear your story out. Pr'ythee, if you can do it without spoiling your narrative, bring him some relief with all speed; even in a tale it grieves me to see a good man suffer.

BEN HAFI.

Be all your wishes fulfilled like this! Amorassan's help is at hand.

CHAPTER XII.

—"In woeful measures, wan despair;
Slow sullen strains her grief beguil'd:
A mingled, strange, and solemn air,
By fits 'twas sad, by starts 'twas wild."—
COLLINS.

In this melancholy condition was our hero found the next day by a caravan, which accident conducted thither. A young man, (his name was Massouf,) whose camels had been hired by the merchants, was the first who discovered him. He stopped the march, restored the suspended powers of animation in Amorassan, and when he understood his forlorn condition proffered him a shelter in the Carnatic. The unfortunate man accepted the proposal with gratitude, and soon found himself a welcome guest in the family of the benevolent Massouf.

That family was a perfect model of domestic happiness. Massouf had a young and blooming wife, whom he loved with his whole soul, and whose bosom gave nourishment to his first child. Oh! while he gazed with tender emotion on these wedded lovers, blest in the enjoyment of tranquil obscurity and domestic comfort, how did Amorassan lament his own hard fate, which had condemned him to be a monarch's friend, a favourite, and a grand vizir!

One morning the lovely Fatme was reposing under the poplars, which shaded her dwelling; her child was in her arms, and all the heart-felt tenderness of a mother was pourtrayed in every look which she cast upon the smiling infant. Every movement of his little hands, every indistinct murmur which issued from his coral lips, seemed to afford her such delight, as all the world's wealth could not purchase. Sometimes she

expressed her rapture by a thousand names of endearment, and then again she sang some infantine ditty, and hushed him to sleep upon her bosom.

Amorassan stood opposite to her, and, while he viewed this picture of maternal love, he felt that happiness existed upon earth; nay, at that moment he felt that he was himself happy. He dwelt with pleasure on the thought that, nourished by this tender mother, and protected by so good a father, the child would grow up in innocence, and when grown up would be placed in a station of life, whose rural, quiet, and enviable obscurity, would form him for virtue and domestic happiness. His heart overflowed with a tender benevolent emotion, and he blessed the fond mother and her child.

Fatme returned into the house, for her infant had now fallen asleep. Amorassan's eyes still followed her with delight, when the sight of the spirit made his cheeks turn pale, and the tears of pleasure which glittered in his eyes seemed changed into ice by the freezing breath of his persecutor.

"You see," she began, "that I forget not my duty. Whom would not the sight of this affectionate mother and her innocent babe deceive? But you have commanded me to warn you against deceptions; others may enjoy such delightful illusions; but they must not be enjoyed by *you*.

"Here, in this very place, in thirteen months and two days from this time, will that child become the prey of the monstrous snake the Anaconda, whose very name makes the hearers tremble! If you repeat my prophecy to the mother, she will start in horror and turn pale, as you do now; and yet will she forget that day and that hour when it arrives, for by that time her marriage vow will be already broken, and clasped in the licentious embraces of a man (whom she now abhors) she will not remember the danger till the fatal moment is past, and her child is become the prey of the hungry Anaconda."

"Murderer of my happiness!—of my repose!" thus exclaimed Amorassan, and tore out whole ringlets of his hair in agony; "thou art no warning counsellor! no daughter of the world of light!—thou art a tormenting demon! thou art to me the Spirit of Despair!"

"Hast thou guessed it at last?" answered the spirit; "right! Despair is my truest name indeed; and the moment, when that word escaped from thy lips, was appointed by destiny to lay before thee the full extent and fatal consequences of thy folly and thy pride—hear me!"

"Never! never!" shrieked Amorassan; "herald of evil tidings, never will I hear thee more."—And with frantic desperation he rushed towards a neighbouring precipice, whose base was washed by the ocean. He reached the summit; but there already stood the spirit in all her freezing overwhelming majesty, and Amorassan remained rooted to his place, immoveable as a statue.

"Short-sighted mortal!" said the spirit, "hear what thy bond-slave has to tell thee, then die, if thou wilt: I shall view thy fall from this precipice calmly as the descent of the autumnal leaf. All that you have commanded have I punctually fulfilled. I have placed the truth before you; I have enabled you to read the hearts of others; I have dispelled the illusions of your own. Now mark what would have happened, had you trusted to the power of virtue and the protection of heaven, and left me undisturbed in the winter of my gloomy islands.

"Yes! Ebu-Beker would still have obtained the sultan's favour, would still have risen to power and dignity; but your genius, unembarrassed by doubts, and confident in the rectitude of your intentions, would have enabled you to counteract the baleful effects of his power. The sultan's heart would still have been estranged from you, but only estranged for a time. Trusting in his friendship because you felt that you deserved it, and that your own for him was undiminished, you would have combated Ebu-Beker's artifices

with the irresistible arms of truth and candour. You would honestly have laid before the sultan your hopes, your fears, and your doubts; the coldness of his affection would have melted before the warmth of yours; and while he felt that your confidence in him was unbounded, you would still have preserved a share in the sultan's. Your brother would still have been a villain; but it depended on yourself whether it should be your hand or Ebu-Beker's which led him to the commission of crimes. Had you, through affectionate weakness, complied with your father's request, and made Zemaun governor of Burglana, he would have betrayed that province to the enemy, and blood would have deluged the fertile plains of Guzurat; but this would only have furnished you with the more brilliant opportunity for displaying your courage and your fidelity, your love for your native land, and the resources of your genius. The sense of danger would have revived in Ibrahim's memory the consciousness of your talents. You would have been recalled to power; Khaled would have been still alive to execute your desires; and with the hand of strength to wield the sword of his armies, and with the head of wisdom to direct his councils, soon would the sultan of Guzurat have triumphed over all his enemies. Zemaun, made captive, would have owned with gratitude, that he was indebted for life to his brother's intercession; Ebu-Beker's perfidy would have been discovered, and his head falling on the scaffold would have paid the price of his crimes; the sultan's whole heart would again have been yours, and yours for ever; and then might he indeed have become such a man as you fondly believed him to be, and such a monarch as you so earnestly desired to make him."

Amorassan. Oh! thou perfidious counsellor! What prevented my producing effects so blessed—what but thy prophetic warnings?

The Spirit. What I prophesied was true; what I

prophesied has happened, and must have happened; but it depended on yourself alone, whether or not it should happen through your agency. Was it I who sought you? Was it I who needed your ministry? Amorassan, weep, rave, despair; but blame no one except yourself.

Yes, despair! for now learn the whole extent of the miseries which your presumptuous pride has drawn down upon your native land. Zemaun lays waste the frontier provinces; the robbers from whom you rescued him, fight beneath his banners; the treasures which you were the means of throwing into his power, have enabled him to multiply the number of his adherents; Burglana is deluged with blood, and he prepares to carry his ravages and his vengeance into the very heart of Guzurat. All is terror, all is tumult, and the armies of Candeish will soon take advantage of the general confusion and dismay. Nor will the enemy's approach be unwelcome to Ahmedabad, so heavily do its wretched inmates feel the iron sway of Ebu-Beker. Every hour sees the scaffold stained with innocent blood; every hour hears the shrieks of the widow and the orphan, deprived of fathers and husbands by Ebu-Beker's cruelty, and robbed of subsistence to gratify Ebu-Beker's avarice.

Amorassan. And does the sultan know all this, yet not redress it? Oh! how must his heart be changed! What, Ibrahim! whose virtues, whose character of mind——

The Spirit. His mind has *no* character; his virtues were but the reflection of your own. You were the object of his admiration, and while she spoke through your lips he fancied that he loved virtue; but you wilfully resigned the empire of his fancy; another now reigns in your stead, and the sultan only sees and hears with the eyes and ears of Ebu-Beker. In vain flows the blood of the innocent. In vain do the streets of Ahmedabad ring with the shrieks of sorrow, with the execrations of despair! When he ceased to love *you*, Ibrahim

ceased to believe in the existence of virtue. He considers you as a hypocrite, an impostor, the slave of self-interest, and a practiser of infernal arts; and, believing *you* to be worthless, he despairs of finding others deserving. Persuaded of the falsehood of him by whom they were inculcated, he believes your principles to have been false as yourself, and he now rules his empire on the principles of Ebu-Beker; yet the softness of his heart makes him still regret the happy days when he believed virtue to be no phantom; he still most bitterly laments that your perfidy dispelled that fond and fair illusion; and, when he hears the curses of his people, he curses *you!*

Amorassan. Have mercy! Let me die!

The Spirit. As thou wilt! I withhold thee no longer.

She lowered her hand, and Amorassan dashed himself headlong from the precipice.

THE CALIPH.

Ah! barbarous Ben Hafi! And did the unfortunate perish thus? Save him this instant, I charge you; I am now more anxious than ever for his preservation; for, as his insupportable spirit has taken her leave of him, there are hopes that the poor man may at length enjoy a little peace and comfort. Now then, Ben Hafi, let us hear what became of him.

CHAPTER XIII.

—"The fairest flowers the vale prefer.
And shed their sweetest odours there;
While the tall pine and mountain oak
Oft feel the tempest's rudest stroke.

Here in this lowly mose-grown seat
Calm peace and rural quiet dwell;
The storms, which rack the rich and great,
Fly harmless o'er the shepherd's cell."—
SHENSTONE.

BEN HAFI.

THE ocean received Amorassan, but not for ever. When his senses returned to him, he found himself stretched on the sea-shore, while by his side knelt an ancient fisherman, who welcomed his return to life with a smile expressing the most sincere and benevolent pleasure.

"Where am I?" inquired Amorassan, after a few minutes passed in silent recollection; "how came I here?"

Alcouz (for that was the fisherman's name) replied, "that while watching his nets he had for some time observed him on the cliff above in earnest conversation with a person of singular habit and appearance, and that he at length saw him, as if seized by sudden giddiness, fall from the summit of the precipice into the billows which bathed its foot; that he had immediately left his nets, jumped into the sea, and brought him safe to land, where the pleasure of seeing him revive had amply repaid him for his labour and his danger."

Amorassan thanked his preserver with every mark of heart-felt gratitude; adding with a sigh,—"thanks are all which it is in my power to give you in return for the preservation of my life."

"Not so," replied Alcouz, "for, if your inclination be as hearty as you say, our meeting may be fortunate enough for both of us. I have made to-day (at least I guess so) the richest draught of fish that ever fell in my

way since I first threw a line. My nets are so full that I have been long labouring without success to bring them to land; now, if you will return the service which I have done you by lending me a helping hand with my booty, I shall think myself richly repaid, and you shall have an ample share of the prize into the bargain."

These words, the tone in which they were spoken, the friendly looks which accompanied them, seemed like balm to the wounded heart of Amorassan.

"You have saved my life," said he, while he took the fisherman's hand; "you have a right to my services; command them; and, if you dare put so much confidence in me, grant the rights of hospitality to a wretch who has no place on earth to rest his head. Gladly will I render you every service of which I am capable, or which you can teach me; but I fear you will find me an awkward and unapt assistant, though not one deficient in attention or good will."

"Mahomet himself would require no more," replied Alcouz, and then led the way to the nets. Amorassan laboured with his whole strength; the draught was a rich one, and nearly filled the fisherman's little bark. This important business accomplished, Alcouz steered homewards, and the new associates soon reached a small but neat-looking cottage, at no great distance from the city of Meliopour.

On hearing the fisherman's voice, who loudly proclaimed the day's success, his daughter unclosed the window, and wished him joy of his good fortune. The sun was just sinking into the western waves, and the reflection of its glow threw a veil of the softest roseate light over the smiling face of the maiden. Amorassan gazed upon her with admiration, but he was suffered to contemplate the lovely sight but for a moment. No sooner was she aware of a stranger's presence, than she concealed her face with her veil; and then, accompanied

by her aged nurse, she came forth to assist her father in conveying his prize into the cottage.

Alcouz now presented the females to Amorassan, and informed them of the essential service which he had rendered him in assisting to bring his nets on shore. Amorassan, on the other hand, maintained that he had only repaid in a very small part his obligations, and related the manner in which Alcouz had preserved his life at the risk of losing his own.

"And yet my father is the most indebted of the two," said the maiden; "what he did for you was a mere act of humanity, and done without reflection; but what you did for him must have been a painful sacrifice. Your language and appearance make it evident that you are not accustomed to such mean offices; and, therefore, while you rendered him your aid, you must have either felt your pride wounded, or at least must have sorely remembered the extent of your misfortunes. Gratitude overpowered these feelings; but, alas! good stranger, the effort must have cost you much."

It was now that Alcouz for the first time observed what his daughter's more acute observation had penetrated with a single glance. With some embarrassment he entreated the stranger's pardon for having treated him with so little respect, when it was evident that he was entitled to so much.

"Good old man," said Amorassan in a dejected tone, "I am an unfortunate! I am an outcast from society, bereft of all my friends, persecuted by many enemies; but I swear to you that I am innocent, if he dares call himself so, who has murmured against the dispensations of heaven, and quarrelled with the imperfections of man. I have no resting-place on earth, no roof to shelter my head from the tempest. Have pity on me! Grant me the rights of hospitality!"

He had not ceased to speak, when the damsel approached in trembling eagerness and tendered a cup of water

with a cluster of freshly-gathered grapes. He tasted the fruit and water, and, as he returned the cup into her hands, she thanked him for his acceptance with a benevolent smile.

"Ask not who I am," he continued; "suffer me to render you such services as are within my power; and when we have tried each other sufficiently, you shall know to whom you have so generously afforded your protection."

"But yet," said the girl with timidity; "but yet *we* have all of us some name or other. My father is called Alcouz, my nurse Dilara; my name is Leilah; and yours——?"

"Call me," answered Amorassan, "call me Zeyn; that is my name at present."

The women now placed the frugal meal upon the table; when it was finished Leilah sang to her lute, and while he listened to her sweet and plaintive voice Amorassan forgot his misfortunes. After an evening passed in happiness, he was conducted into a small but cleanly chamber, and as he laid his head upon his pillow—"thou fearful Persecutor," said he to himself, "visit me no more, and I am saved."

Zeyn (for as he was only known by that name in the fisherman's family, by that name he must be called henceforward) was treated from this moment as the adopted son of his kind host. He exerted all his powers to repay such benevolent protection; and success crowned his toil so uniformly, that frequently did Alcouz repeat—"the blessings of Allah came into my house with Zeyn." The heart of the young man bounded with joy, as he heard the sentence; for so completely had despondency crushed his spirit, that he had till then looked on himself as on a wretch destined to bring misfortune wherever his accursed footsteps fell. But now he again raised his head, and existence again became valuable in his eyes, for he felt that there were beings in the world to whose happiness his existence was of consequence.

In this manner had several months passed away, when the venerable Alcouz, by sleeping imprudently in his boat at night, contracted a malady which terminated in his losing the total use of his limbs. Zeyn attended him during his illness as if he had really been his son; he now undertook alone the charge of supporting the family; and in the intervals of labour he omitted no means of cheering the old man's depressed spirits, and soothing his sufferings by discourses of hope and consolation. Daily he bore the helpless Alcouz on his shoulders to an open place near the city, which was planted with stately trees, in order that he might enjoy the freshness of the air, the pleasant shade, the song of the birds, and the occasional society of his passing acquaintance; and the neighbours, who saw him constantly pass along with his venerable burthen, blessed his filial piety, and prayed that their children might but show them as much affection as Alcouz experienced from the youthful stranger.

"My friend! my son!" said the fisherman, "one day when he gazed on Zeyn affectionately, and tears of gratitude filled his eyes, "were it not for you, what a miserable wretch should I be at this moment! A helpless cripple, who must lie down and die of hunger with his poor innocent child, or must owe a precarious existence to the charity of passers-by! Ah! never did the sea yield me so rich a prize, as when I snatched you from its billows! Even my bodily sufferings scarcely seem to me a misfortune, the solicitude and the pleasure which you seem to feel in relieving them, make my heart glow so warm and beat so grateful. And yet it is very hard that you should be obliged to labour singly to support us all! How happy should I feel, were it not for this care—and one other——

Zeyn. What is that other care?

Alcouz. Ah! I should long ago have entrusted you with it, could you have relieved it, as you do the rest;

but that may not be! you are not of our station; you have, it is true, lowered yourself to us (as my daughter says), and at present deign to share our obscurity and want; but justice cannot long leave a man like you in misfortune (at least so says my daughter), and therefore any connexion which you form with us, must be considered as merely temporary. I confess at first I thought otherwise; but my daughter convinced me that she was in the right, and therefore I must take my anxiety with me into the grave undivulged.

Zeyn. If that anxiety regards your daughter, let me spare you the necessity of revealing it. You have long treated me with the affection of a father; you have bestowed on me the name of your son. Worthy Alcouz, give me with Leilah's hand a title to that name!

The good old man was unable to answer, but he pointed to the road conducting him to his cottage. Leilah stood on the threshold, and hastened with anxious tenderness to enquire what brought her father home so much before his accustomed hour. Alcouz told her what had passed; and the maiden blushed as deeply as when, on the first evening of their meeting, the setting sun illuminated her countenance with its roseate light. Zeyn placed his hand in that of the trembling girl, and pronounced the vow of eternal affection. As the words passed his lips, he recollected the warning spirit. The blood fled from his cheeks, as he cast a look of fearful inquiry round him; and, oh! from what an oppressive weight did his heart feel relieved when his eye encountered not the chilling glance of that dreaded enemy.

MUZAFFER.

Manifold as have been the follies of your fantastic hero, Ben Hafi, this last surpasses them all! What! a poor fisherman's daughter become the wife of the grand-vizir of Guzurat, whose power ——

In the name of heaven, Muzaffer, do not interrupt Ben Hafi; I had quite forgotten that Amorassan had ever had the calamity of being a vizir, and now only recollected, that he was fortunate enough to be a virtuous man! Go on, go on, Ben Hafi! Tell your tale according to your own fancy; introduce as many fishermen, and cripples, and beggars as you choose; they shall all be welcome to me, and my only objection to their introduction is, that it is not in my power to make them all rich, and all well, and all happy.

CHAPTER XIV.

—"Oh! Conspiracy,
Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough
To mask thy monstrous visage?"—

Julius Cæsar.

BEN HAFI.

It was midnight when Zeyn sought the sea-shore, in hopes that a lucky haul would enable him to furnish the table on his wedding-day more plenteously than usual. He steered towards the rocks, threw out his nets, and having fastened his little bark to the shrubs which were rooted at its base, he for the first time ventured to ascend the precipice on which he had formerly endured all the agonies of dying. It was here that he determined to wait for sun-rise.

He was weary with rowing, and the awakening morning air blew keen and cutting. To guard himself from the blast he entered a narrow cleft of the rock, laid himself down, and was soon buried in slumber.

But he had not long enjoyed this repose when he was roused by the sound of voices; they ascended from a cave

in the lower part of the rock, which happened to be exactly under the place where he was resting. He listened, and heard the whole details of a plot formed against the government of the sultan of the Carnatic. He collected from their discourse that the speakers were persons of considerable consequence in the sultan's court. Every one complained of the sovereign's severity, of his neglect of his nobles, of his exaltation of men of low birth to the first offices of the state, and particularly of the ill treatment of his deserving son. According to their account, this young prince was compelled by his father's avarice and jealousy to submit to the most degrading humiliations, was restrained in all his pursuits and indulgences, and carefully debarred from all share of power and exertion of influence; and it seemed to be the universal opinion, that nothing could release him from this disgraceful captivity except the deposition of the man who treated him so little like a father. Every one endeavoured to excuse his treason under colour of justice and the necessity of the case; and numerous arguments were advanced to prove, that the execution of their design would be one of the most noble actions ever accomplished; since, instead of the weak and bigotted sultan, it would place a youthful, wise, and generous-minded prince on the throne, whose brilliant talents and extraordinary virtues could not fail to produce the happiness of the whole kingdom, and to restore that vigour to its government which had mouldered away under the erroneous administration of the reigning monarch. Occasionally the conference was interrupted by a soft complaining voice, which appeared rather to moderate than incite the resentment of the rest, till at length it even seemed to be changed into the tone of supplication; but its accents were so low, that it was impossible for Zeyn at such a distance to collect their import.

The conference was now at an end. The plan was finally arranged, and its execution confirmed by solemn oaths. The beams of the rising sun now glittered upon

the ocean's bosom, and Zeyn heard the confederates below as if preparing to depart. With caution he advanced his head beyond the precipice, and saw the conspirators issue forth and hasten to their horses, which slaves held for them at some distance. He counted fourteen; they gave the spur to their coursers, and soon disappeared from his sight.

Zeyn now quitted his lurking-place, and soon discovered the entrance to the cave. He entered, and seating himself on a projection of the rock remained for some time meditating on the important discovery which he had just made. He had heard the sultan described as a man who distributed justice with the strictest impartiality; who was not known to be the slave of any particular weakness himself; and who never suffered crimes to pass unpunished, whether their perpetrator was a member of his divan or a driver of camels. Zeyn, therefore, thought it absolutely necessary that this dangerous conspiracy should be revealed without delay; yet he could not think without repugnance on again interfering with the affairs of sovereigns. Besides, he was now nothing better than a poor fisherman, and how could he expect to gain an audience of the sultan? the very request must needs excite suspicion; and, if the slightest hint of his business once reached the conspirators, how easy would it be for such powerful persons to prevent his story from ever coming to the sultan's knowledge, either by despatching him privately, or burying him in some secret prison till their plan should be effected?

Such were the reflections, whose thread was broken by a noise but too well known to him! It was the garment of his persecutor, which streamed in the wind with a rushing murmur. In the same instant the spirit stood before him, and the sun, which pierced through a chasm of the rock, threw its beams upon that countenance, so cold, so serious, so awfully lovely. A groan of despair burst from the bosom of the wretched man, who felt that he was again the persecuted Amorassan; and,

as he gazed in silence upon the dreaded vision, all his tranquillity, all his happiness, all his wishes, all his hopes, seemed at once to expire in his heart.

"Amorassan," said the spirit, "when last I parted from you I thought that we parted to meet no more; but the sea was not suffered to conceal you, and I am still your slave. Yet tremble not at my presence! That last page, which I was not permitted to read in the Book of Destiny, and which contains the sum of your future fortunes, at this moment is unfolded; but your own heart must be your sole guide on this occasion, and I am not permitted to warn you or foretel the consequences of that act, which now agitates your uncertain thoughts. Happy is it for you that I am *not* permitted!

"Look down, Amorassan! a seal-ring lies at your feet, and that seal-ring will confirm the truth of your discovery. Hereafter mankind shall vaunt the lucky accident which drew it from its owner's finger: perhaps, you will even yourself believe it to have fallen by accident, for such is the name which short-sighted mortals bestow on all occurrences whose concealed principles are beyond their comprehension. Guard well that ring, and now act according to your free will, aided by no better counsellor than unbiassed human judgment. Fortune again proffers her sceptre to your hand; and now it depends upon himself alone to decide, whether Amorassan will resume all that he has lost, his wealth, his power, his greatness. Farewell! Probably for ever! I came to you without joy, and I leave you without sorrow." She said, and disappeared.

Amorassan carefully secured the ring within the folds of his girdle, drew his nets hastily, and regained the shore, while his mind was all confusion and alarm. Almost unconsciously he directed his steps towards the sultan's residence; the market-place lay in his road, and while traversing it he heard a herald proclaiming—"that the prince had lost his seal-ring at the chase! and

that whoever could find it, and restore it to its royal owner, should be rewarded with two hundred drachmas and a robe of honour."

The herald proceeded to describe the signet; Amorassan felt a cold shivering seize his limbs when he recognised the ring, which at that moment was enveloped in his girdle. Before he was yet well recovered from the alarm of this discovery, he was roused by a sudden tumult in the market-place, and, on inquiring the cause, was informed that the sultan and his son were passing through it in their way to the principal mosque.

Thither also hastened Amorassan, eager to see the two illustrious persons, of whose destinies he was unexpectedly become master. He forced his way through the crowd with an impetuosity which bore down every obstacle, and soon found himself within the consecrated walls.

The sultan was a man still in the prime of life, majestic in his deportment, but whose serious look was prevented from wearing any appearance of severity by the benevolence of his expressive countenance. The prince was at no great distance from his father; he was a lovely youth; yet the brilliance of his personal beauty was considerably obscured by a certain pensive gloom, for which Amorassan knew but too well how to account. His eyes were still fixed upon the prince's face with insatiable curiosity, when he heard a voice from the pulpit pronounce aloud—"Ye true believers, know that the Chief Iman has a dead person in his house, and is forbidden by the law from haranguing you this day. Let him, therefore, who feels the inspiration of Allah, assume his place, and may the prophet shed his spirit upon the speaker's lips!"

Instantly a ray of light penetrated the mind of Amorassan. Eagerly he ascended the pulpit, and after a prayer for the preservation of the sultan's life, he announced in a prophetic tone the existence of a most dangerous conspiracy, and called upon the people in

energetic language to unite in defence of so excellent a sovereign. His discourse and manner excited universal astonishment. The people concluded that the fisherman must needs be some unfortunate person, whom religious enthusiasm had deprived of his senses. But the wiser sultan read in the orator's eyes that his warnings were founded on more substantial grounds than he judged it prudent to explain to the multitude. Accordingly, the fisherman no sooner quitted the pulpit than he was summoned to the palace by a royal command.

He lost no time in relating to the sultan his adventure on the rock in all its circumstances. The monarch doubted the existence of so atrocious a plot, and warned his informer not to trifle with him in a matter of such dangerous importance; yet, even granting his story to be true, how could the culprits be recognised? The fisherman had not heard a single name, and he had listened at too great a distance to allow the possibility of his discovering them by the sound of their voices.

"Mighty lord!" said Amorassan, "thus much I know, that the fourteen conspirators are all members of the supreme divan. Let a herald immediately call your whole council together, announcing that you require their assistance in consequence of the discovery of a most dangerous and treasonable plot. My oration in the mosque must already have given them the alarm, and this further mention of a conspiracy will confirm the justice of their fears: on my life, the culprits will not dare to show themselves in your divan."

"I like your counsel well," answered the sultan; "and I like it the better because by thus allowing them time to fly I shall spare myself the necessity of shedding human blood; a necessity ever painful to my heart, however guilty be the sufferer. The divan shall be summoned instantly."

"Yet one word!" observed Amorassan; "your enemies are equally the enemies of your son; perhaps are

even more so. Then, before your herald announces the certain existence of this plot, let your guards instantly hasten to the prince's palace, and prevent all possibility of his falling into danger by escorting him to the divan."

"So be it!" replied the sultan. The divan was summoned, and thirteen of the principal members of it failed to make their appearance. Messengers were despatched a second time to require their presence; when it appeared that some hours before they had quitted the metropolis with every mark of terror and consternation.

On leaving the divan, the sultan's first care was to summon the fisherman to his presence.

"Your veracity is confirmed," said the monarch; "yet my preservation is still incomplete. But thirteen of my nobles failed to appear in the divan; and while the fourteenth (who perhaps is the most dangerous among them all) remains undiscovered, what perils have I not to expect from his secret machinations?"

"Sultan," replied Amorassan, "that fourteenth is well known to me; but till this moment I judged it unwise to discover that knowledge. Look on this well-known ring; it belongs to the chief of the conspiracy."

"All-powerful Allah!" exclaimed the sultan, and the colour forsook his cheeks; "my son! my only son!"

Amorassan. It is but too true! I feel in my own heart how deep is the wound I have just inflicted upon thine.

The Sultan. And why did you not reveal his guilt immediately?

Amorassan. I feared lest in the first movements of surprise and indignation you should divulge his crimes to the divan; terror would probably have forced from the prince an avowal of his transgression; and, while you punished his accomplices, with what show of justice could you have suffered the principal offender to escape with impunity? Either as a sovereign you must have resigned your sole offspring to the scaffold, or by pardoning him

as a father have shown your people a partial monarch in their ruler, and an unnatural son in his destined successor. I therefore put myself in your place; I felt for you as a father should feel. It now rests with yourself to act towards the prince as parent, or as judge. His evil counsellors are removed; their places, filled by honest men of your own selection, will prevent the recurrence of this danger; your son is still respectable in the eyes of your court and of your people; you only are conscious of his offence, and (might I advise) he should remain for ever ignorant that it is known even to *you!* Alas! how would he ever dare again to meet the eyes of the father whom he had so much injured? How could he ever place confidence in that father's love who had such good cause to despise and dread him?

The Sultan. In this, as in all else, you have acted with true prudence! Yes! in the first moments of surprise I should have sacrificed my son to my resentment, and the rest of my existence would have been one long agony of remorse! You have saved my life, but that is little; you have saved my son's, and that benefit is inestimable. And yet, can it be possible? What! The son, whom I have ever loved so dearly, can *he*..... what cause..... what motive.....

Amorassan. Pardon me, while I explain even that. You have loved him as your son and as your heir; but your manner of loving him has been adapted according to your own affections and views, not according to his. You forgot that he is young, and that youth is the season of the passions. You censured his failings with severity; perhaps with more than you would have censured *any* failings except *his;* the trifling levities, natural to his age, were magnified into heinous offences by your over-eagerness to see your son a model of perfection; your anxiety to accustom him to economy, and to save your people from the extortions of a profuse and voluptuous sovereign, induced you to limit him even in his lawful

and unavoidable expenses, and it is easy for parsimony to degenerate into avarice. It was by placing these features of your character, painted in exaggerated colours, before your son's eyes, that he was induced to favour this conspiracy. I speak not this at random; I repeat but the discourse of the conspirators themselves, while conversing with the Prince in the secret cavern. But though his reason was deluded, they could not corrupt his heart. I heard the mournful sound of his voice, which never rose above the accent of complaint; he spoke to soften, not to exasperate; Sultan, act by him with prudence, and I will stake my life that your son's heart will still be yours.

The Sultan. Your words have been like daggers; but I thank you for them, since I feel their truth. But you, whose eye can pierce so deeply, what is your name and your condition?

Amorassan. I *am* a humble fisherman. What I *was*, ask not; I desire no other reward.

The Sultan. Be it so! let us forget what you *were;* let us only speak of what you *shall* be. I need a man like you; my son (as you know but too well) needs such a man still more than myself. Remain at my court; the place of vizir, wealth, honour, and the fairest virgin of my harem. . . .

Amorassan. The daughter of my benefactor is already my betrothed; and the hut, which I inhabit, is much too small for the habitation of a virgin of your harem. I am a fisherman now, I will remain so.

The Sultan. Yet let me do something towards your comfort! The reward promised to the restorer of this ring is at least your legal due.

Amorassan. Then give it quickly and let me away! My bride must already be uneasy at my absence; and the hour draws near, when I am accustomed to bear my lame father to enjoy the evening breeze.

The Sultan. And should I need your counsels, (for

where shall I obtain wiser?) will my friend refuse them? How shall I find you?

Amorassan. My name is Zeyn; I dwell on the sea-shore with my adopted father, Alcouz, the palsied fisherman.

The Sultan. Zeyn, from this moment *I* too am your father. and will then my son leave me without making *one* request?

Amorassan. No, I will make one. Be gentle to the deluded youth, your son!

The Sultan. Generous Zeyn! I swear it! On my death-bed only will I give him this ring, and tell him how and where I found it! It shall be handed down in my family as a heir-loom, and every possessor of the throne shall bear it on his finger. But mark me, Zeyn; unrewarded you must not leave me, not for your own sake, but for mine. The city talks of nothing but your services; who will in future render me services, if *you* are seen to go without reward? The tale will spread from town to town, from village to village—"The poor fisherman saved the sultan's life, and the avaricious sultan suffered the fisherman to remain as poor as ever." The love and respect of my subjects are my dearest treasures, and of these I must not suffer your disinterestedness to rob me. Accept, therefore, enough to maintain your family in ease and comfort, and save me from the heavy charge of ingratitude.

Amorassan. Your reasons are just, and I obey! I accept your proffered bounty; I thank you for your generosity to your son; I bathe with my tears the honoured hands which hold so well the scales of justice; I bless you, and depart!

Amorassan hastened back to the hut, embraced Alcouz and his bride, and forgot that he had ever been any other than Zeyn, the fisherman.

The next morning was to make Leilah his wife. Buried in tender melancholy, he stood alone at his

chamber-window, when suddenly the form of the warning spirit showed itself in the cold bright flood of moonshine. Amorassan started.

"We meet for the last time," said the spirit; "your heart has decided your future fate; by the command of my omnipotent master I now separate myself from you for ever, and return to the Frozen Ocean, and my native islands of chilness and gloom. Whether you have learned any thing during our intercourse, I neither know nor care. Truth was shown you; you could not support the sight, and sighed more anxiously for illusion than you had ever sighed for truth. You have rejected the sultan's favour; you have resolved to remain an unknown fisherman; perhaps you have judged wisely, perhaps not; I know not, but this at least I know; in order to make yourself what you are now there was no need of calling me from the Frozen Ocean. With this truth I dissolve our union; farewell, and for ever!"

She placed her hand on his forehead; her touch congealed the blood in his veins; his heart seemed frozen, and he sank upon his couch insensible. And now stood before his mental eye in bright vision the assembly of illustrious spirits who inhabit the pavilion of Mount Caucasus. The superior genius extended his wand, and Amorassan saw the glorious deeds of the sons of virtue trace themselves on the airy walls in the brilliant colours of morning. At length his own praiseworthy deeds appeared upon the glowing panels; but far out-shining all the rest was the service he had daily rendered to the poor old palsied fisherman.

"Amorassan!" said the Genius Gela-Eddin, "your affections have revived those flowers of your life, which the breath of cold unfeeling prudence had chilled and blighted. In fulfilling well the every-day duties of our station, and not in its height or its extent, consists true greatness; in the rectitude of our intentions, not in the success of our actions, consists true merit. Let the heart

prompt his measures, let the understanding advise the means, let benevolence and reason unite in forming his plans, and then may the mortal walk forward in his appointed course with firm and fearless footsteps. Beyond this, all is Destiny's!"

Amorassan awoke; the roseate vapours of the vision still seemed to glow upon his countenance; the voice of the genius still sounded in his ears, and the pulses of his heart faithfully echoed back every tone of that celestial harmony.

THE CALIPH.

As many visions as you please, Ben Hafi, but no more freezing spirits! However, Amorassan has parted with his persecutor for ever; and since he would now no longer bring such a disagreeable companion along with him, I am truly sorry that his dislike to sultans will prevent his accepting an invitation to Bagdad. I should have been heartily glad to see him; but it seems he is determined to do nothing for the remainder of his life but catch fish, and keep clear of courts and princes; and truly I cannot but acknowledge that he is very much in the right.

CHAPTER XV.

—"Witness Heaven,
What love sincere and reverence in my heart
I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
Unhappily deceived."— MILTON.

BEN HAFI.

It is true, most mighty Lord, that Amorassan wished in future to avoid princes; but it was his destiny to find their affairs continually intermingled with his own. Scarcely had three months elapsed since his marriage,

when one night a knocking was heard at the door of his new dwelling: it was a modest but convenient house, which the sultan in gratitude had caused to be erected on the very spot, to which Amorassan had been accustomed to bear the lame Alcouz every evening.

Leilah hastened to open the door. A youth in mean apparel, but whose pale countenance immediately interested her in his favour, complained of weariness and hunger, and requested hospitality for a single night. It was granted readily; but the next morning the stranger was too ill to proceed on his journey. He remained in the cottage, and for many weeks received from Amorassan and his wife the attentions due to a brother. Their care at length conquered the obstinacy of his complaint, and the stranger declared himself indebted to them alone under heaven for health and life.

During his convalescence, a friendship of the closest nature was formed between the stranger and his host. Amorassan at length carried his confidence so far, as to reveal to him even the most secret transactions of his life; and the stranger repaid confidence with confidence.

"Your story," said he, "in many respects is not unlike my own. I too was born to prosperity and splendour; my eyes first unclosed themselves in a palace, and my father was one of those ill-fated mortals, to whom the painful task is allotted of governing their fellow creatures.

"I had an elder brother; never did nature form a mortal of milder materials, or one who possessed a more pure or more generous heart; and this brother loved *me* as never brother loved a brother before; and *I* loved this brother as never man was loved by man.

"Our father was a wise and deep-thinking sovereign; he had witnessed our childish affection with satisfaction; but, now that the years of manhood were approaching, he apprehended lest the younger son should be tempted by this apparent equality to forget his duty to his future

master, and began to consider so intimate a connexion as highly dangerous to my brother and the state."

THE CALIPH.

Ben Hafi!—Surely, it is not possible—but proceed! Quick, quick, Ben Hafi!

BEN HAFI.

"One day, our father sent for us into his closet, read us a severe lecture upon the different duties of our stations, and commanded me in future never more to address or approach my future master with that unseemly familiarity to which I had hitherto been accustomed. He left us—we remained for some minutes silent and bewildered; at length I raised my eyes to my brother's and I saw that they were filled with tears.

(And at this moment tears gushed from the eyes of the caliph. Ben Hafi appeared not to remark his emotion, and continued.)

"I threw myself on his bosom, and exclaimed—'Be my master; my strict, my revered, my dreaded master; a master as strict and dreaded as our father appears to *us*; but yet love me still in your heart, my brother; I only ask to be still loved in the secrecy of your heart!'

"'You are my brother,' he replied, while he pressed me to his bosom; 'how then can I ever be your master? We are brethren now; and how can we ever be aught else?'

"The next morning he entered my chamber with the first beams of light. He took my arm, rubbed upon my wrist a little ointment, and then stamped it with a signet on which his name was engraved. Such was the virtue of that particular ointment, that the characters from that moment were impossible to be effaced. He then obliged me to stamp my name upon *his* wrist in a similar manner.

"'And now,' said he 'if ever the slightest suspicion

should arise between us, if ever the most trifling movement of displeasure shall evince itself in my conduct towards you, come to me withour fear, and show me this mark. I shall remember the occasion on which it was engraved; I shall banish all distrust and displeasure from my bosom; and, be the cause of our disunion slight or important, I swear by Allah, that I will instantly forget it, and remember nothing except that you are my brother and my friend.'

"Shortly after this we were separated, and our education was conducted on different plans. My brother's instructors were quite of another species from mine, and their lessons were solely calculated to form the *sovereign*, what regarded the *man* was (they thought) no business of theirs; or, if it formed any part of their instructions, it was only to impress upon their pupil's mind their great leading maxim, that the feelings of the second ought always to be subordinate to the rights and duties of the first.

"My father died: my brother ascended the throne; and now . . . . . !

"No; I do not censure my deluded, my misguided brother; but I censure myself, that, when I possessed in letters of my enemies the certain vindication of my affection and fidelity, I suffered the feeling of indignant pride and wounded friendship to make me disdain all explanation. These tears do not flow because I now wander through the world a houseless beggar, but because my absence has left him alone and defenceless in the power of his seducers. Why did I not appeal to his fraternal friendship? Why did I not trust to his generous heart? Even had he still believed me to be a traitor, even had he punished my supposed crime with death, the attempt at vindication would but have cost me my life; but silence and suspicious flight must surely have cost my brother his innocence. Believing me to be false, he will believe no one to be faithful; believing

my virtue to have been a mask, he will believe others to be equally dissemblers. I left him surrounded by men but too well disposed to take advantage of his generous yielding nature, and mould it to their own ambitious and interested views. His power will be abused; his people will be miserable; and he will himself be wretched on his golden throne, for I know that, deprived of me, his heart never can be happy."

At this moment the deaf Megnoun started from the ground, and exclaimed with strong emotion—"Ben Hafi, you surely speak of the good prince Abdallah: nothing else could affect my lord so strongly!"

"Yes! oh! yes!" the caliph pronounced with difficulty; the poor forlorn stranger . . . . . was Abdallah! was my brother!"

He reclined his head upon the shoulder of Megnoun, and sobbed aloud.

"Amurath!" said, after a few moments, a gentle voice, whose well-known melody pierced to the caliph's very heart. He uttered a cry of astonishment; he started from the sofa, and unclosed his arms. Ben Hafi had thrown off his upper garment; the grey beard and wrinkles had disappeared, and the roses of youth glowed upon his smiling cheeks. He now wore the same dress in which the caliph had seen his brother on the night previous to his flight from Bagdad, and he pointed to certain characters impressed upon the naked wrist of his right hand.

"Abdallah!" cried the caliph, and threw himself upon his bosom; "my friend, my brother! I have thee again then, my happiness! my strength! my reason! my virtue!—Ah, Abdallah! canst thou forgive me?"

"Say rather," replied the prince, "canst thou forgive me for having rejected all explanation? I ought to have insisted upon admission to your presence; I ought to have shown you this well-known mark, these characters impressed by the hand of fraternal friendship. . . . . "

"No, no, my brother!" interrupted the caliph, while he kissed the mark on his brother's wrist, and bathed it with repentant tears; "you did wisely and well to avoid me. Had you at that time ventured into my presence. . . . . I was so blinded! so deluded. . . . but I have since discovered the treachery, though not its authors."

"Their names are well known to *me*," replied Abdallah; "Muzaffer will see that their guilt is placed beyond the power of doubting by this letter."

As he said this, he presented a paper to the thunderstruck vizir. He read but a few lines, then fell at the prince's feet, and murmured—"Be merciful."—The caliph's eyes flamed with indignant vengeance; Abdallah became a suppliant for his vanquished enemy. Muzaffer was allowed to preserve his life, and a moderate proportion of his treasures, but was ordered to quit the caliph's dominions within eight and forty hours o pain of death. And now Amurath turned again to his brother with tender reproaches for having kept him so long in ignorance of his being so near him.

"Report," said Abdallah, "represented you to me in such odious colours, and the miseries, which I witnessed while travelling through your dominions, confirmed so strongly the belief of your altered disposition, that I thought it imprudent to present myself before you without having ascertained your real character. But I was convinced that the vizir, not the caliph, was the tyrant under whose oppression Arabia groaned, and that my brother was, as a man, the same benevolent generous being whom, as a boy, I had loved so dearly."

"But your voice . . . so soft . . . . so touching . . . . how could I have ever mistaken its sweet harmonious accents?"

"You were misled by a thin plate of silver place upon my tongue, and which altered its tone completely."

"And your friend, Amorassan? Alas! I fear, that he was a deception too! But one thing, Abdallah, I cannot consent to believe ideal! Oh! still preserve in my mind the belief, that there really exists that bright pavilion; and, let me die in the happy persuasion, that hand in hand we shall one day be received there. Then, brother, then shall we take our places among the Spirits and the Genii! and *you* shall sit by my side; and my poor deaf Megnoun shall sit at my feet; and Allah shall send down a friendly gracious look, as a benediction on his children.

PEACE BE WITH YOU, AND WITH ME!"

THE END.

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